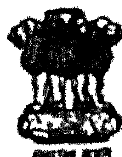


THE COLLECTED WORKS OF

MAHATMA GANDHI

LXIV

(November 3, 1936–March 14, 1937)



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PREFACE

During the period (November 3, 1936 to March 14, 1937) that the present volume covers, the country saw two public events of note: the throwing open of temples to Harijans in Travancore and the Faizpur session of the Congress, the first to be held in a village. The former moved Gandhiji profoundly. He welcomed the Maharaja's proclamation as an act whereby the "sins of the past ages" had "been obliterated by literally a stroke of the pen" (p. 242). At the Congress session, on the other hand, Gandhiji's interest was confined to the khadi and village industries exhibition and he took little part in the general proceedings though the session was of considerable political significance inasmuch as the theme of its deliberations was the Government of India Act of 1935 which was about to be brought into force. He had, since October 1934, become increasingly absorbed in village reconstruction work, and had now settled in Segaon where he did not "meet anyone" and did not "read newspapers much" (p. 50).

Gandhiji's indifference to political problems did not mean that he had turned his back on the fight for freedom. It was, he asserted, "a fight to the finish", but it was a non-violent fight and civil disobedience was not the only process of non-violence. "In the garden of non-violence there are many plants" (p. 385), Gandhiji explained, and he was then nurturing the plant of economic, moral and social regeneration of India's villages. Political independence, which for Gandhiji meant "sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority", was linked with "economic independence" achieved through "the economic uplift of every individual, male and female, by his or her own conscious effort" (pp. 191-2). The edifice of such *poorna* swaraj required for its building the participation of the masses on the widest scale possible; the parliamentary programme, which the Congress had taken up, would undoubtedly help, but Gandhiji saw that its usefulness was limited, what with the franchise being extremely restricted, with no more than 3½ out of 35 crores voting. He had therefore turned to the 31½ crores in the villages, educating them, infusing in them the consciousness of their numerical strength till there would be no need left for either civil disobedience or violence (p. 195). It was to be "a kind of practical adult education to be put to use as it progresses". The villagers

were to be "taught to know what they should want and how to obtain it in the shape of sanitation and hygiene, improvement of material conditions and social relations" (p. 71). Drawing a picture of an ideal village, Gandhiji pointed out that almost "the whole of the programme . . . can be worked out . . . without Government assistance" if the villagers could be persuaded "to help themselves" through "mutual co-operation" and to "contribute voluntary labour for the common good" (p. 217).

Gandhiji invited in this task of village regeneration the co-operation of all, particularly the middle-class people, for it was they, he charged, who had "betrayed their trust and bartered away the economic independence of India for a mess of pottage" (p. 193), allowing the cities to become "foreign markets" and "drain the villages dry by dumping cheap and shoddy goods from foreign lands" (p. 118) He urged them "to take the message of the wheel" and all that it stood for "to the villagers and induce them to shed their laziness", for, he warned, it "would be a terrible thing if laziness replaces industry and despair triumphs over hope" (p. 193). Gandhiji welcomed even foreign assistance of the right kind. In one thing, he used to tell American visitors, "I do not mind being a beggar. I would beg of you your scientific talent. You can ask your engineers and agricultural experts to place their services at our disposal" (p. 99). It was not only science as mechanical skill that Gandhiji valued; he urged the khadi workers to cultivate the scientific approach and method in tackling their problems, to pursue the programme "in a deliberate, wise, methodical manner and in a scientific spirit, taking nothing for granted, testing every proposition, checking facts and figures, undaunted by defeats, unelated by petty successes, never satisfied till the goal is reached". This impersonal method of science, however, was to be combined with deep personal involvement and missionary dedication, for if khadi was a science it was also a romance and gave workers like Maganlal Gandhi and Richard Gregg "all the joy and pleasure derivable from any fascinating theme". "A science to be science," Gandhiji explained, "must afford the fullest scope for satisfying the hunger of body, mind and soul", and he illustrated how "fascinating" the subject of khadi could be by framing a large number of questions which every khadi worker must study (pp. 248-51).

Gandhiji knew, of course, that his village reconstruction programme was "a stupendous task." The villagers suffered from "hopeless unwillingness . . . to better their lot". There were

villages, smaller and more illiterate even than Segaon, where the people, Gandhiji explained to some visitors, "hug their ignorance and dirt as they do their untouchability" (pp. 71 and 218). But there was no need to lose heart. "Patient effort will show," Gandhiji reassured a young man who was somewhat discouraged, "that villagers are not very different from city-dwellers and that they will respond to kindliness and attention" (p. 388). In some respects, Gandhiji believed, they were even better, more Indian at heart, than the city-dwellers. He asked a group of foreigners on a visit to Segaon "to ignore big cities" if they would see "the heart of India". The "big cities here," he told them, "are but poor editions of your big cities." Deep in the interior, where people were "untouched by post and telegraphs", they would see "a kind of culture which," Gandhiji said, "you miss in the West", a natural spirituality which was "an inherited culture" and therefore as "unconscious of itself" as the activities of breathing and seeing when one is in full health (pp. 116-7).

This essential humanity of the Indian villager could be awakened into activity only by public workers of exceptional purity of character. Gandhiji could not "appreciate, much less adopt", the view that the "character of a public worker . . . is his own private concern" (p. 11). A worker aspiring to serve the villagers should regard himself as a Khudai Khidmatgar (servant of God), should go and stay in a village "like a true villager" and participate in the villagers' "daily toil". He should overcome the attraction of the material comforts and intellectual pursuits available in cities and be content with what the "poor villagers could provide", tuning his mind "to the reception of permanent values" embodied in the works of saints who "wrote and spoke for the masses". He should be prepared to do scavenging, should "master the science of sanitation" and educate the Bhangi in the same, clothing him thereby "with the dignity and respect due to him" as "a Brahmin *par excellence*". Such a worker would, by his very presence, make the village "more livable and lovable" (pp. 173, 407, 388 and 86-7).

Economic resurgence of the villages necessarily brought in the question of socialism, then being hotly debated in the country. Gandhiji's position was quite unequivocal. "All land belongs to Gopal," he quoted, and added "Gopal . . . means the State, i.e., the people. . . . Land and all property is his who will work it" (p. 192). "Unfortunately," he added, "the workers are or have been kept ignorant of this simple fact" (p. 192). Gandhiji

reiterated this basically socialist position in his award as one of the arbitrators in the Ahmedabad labour dispute. Workmen, he said, should be regarded as equal owners with the share-holders. "Why should a million rupees put together," he asked, "be more than a million men or women put together?" Gandhiji therefore ruled in his award that workers' wages may not be reduced to ensure a minimum of profits (pp. 363-4). Talking to an Egyptian visitor he explicitly stated that he would welcome communism if it "came without any violence". "For then," he said, "no property would be held by anybody except on behalf of the people and for the people" (p. 312). Communism meant in the last analysis "a classless society", and that was, Gandhiji told a Roman Catholic priest, "an ideal . . . worth striving for" (p. 423). It was known that on this question of economic policy Jawaharlal Nehru and Gandhiji differed, but it was, as Gandhiji explained, a "difference . . . of emphasis". Jawaharlal believed in industrialization; Gandhiji had "grave doubts about its usefulness for India". Jawaharlal, moreover, believed in the inevitability of class conflict, though, as Gandhiji said, "he would avoid it if he could." Gandhiji saw no such necessity. He expected "to convert the zamindars and other capitalists by non-violent methods", for, he argued, "if the toilers intelligently combine, they will become an irresistible power" (p. 73).

The difference between Gandhiji on the one hand and Nehru and the socialists on the other was rooted in the fact that for Gandhiji non-violence was an absolute value. He even went to the extent of arguing in a hypothetical case that "one may not . . . try to wean dependents and relations from their career of theft and murder through compulsion" (p. 331). Gandhiji's ahimsa embraced non-human life too. "The chief value of Hinduism," according to him, lay "in holding the actual belief that all life (not only human beings, but all sentient beings) is one" (p. 141), and therefore, though "in the present state of modern ignorance" Gandhiji did countenance campaigns of killing rats, fleas, mosquitoes, etc., he believed as "a fundamental truth of life" that "all God's creatures have the right to live as much as we have". It was, he explained, "man's habit of killing man on the slightest pretext" that "has darkened his reason" and permitted him to take "liberties with other life" (p. 215). Gandhiji had in mind such all-embracing ahimsa when he explained to an American visitor that, when "properly understood and used", it was "an intensely active force". Being an invisible force, it might not seem to work for a while, but in

fact it was "the greatest force at the disposal of mankind" and the effects of ahimsa like the Buddha's, Gandhiji said, "persist" and "grow with age". The more such ahimsa is practised "the more effective and inexhaustible it becomes, and ultimately the whole world stands agape and exclaims, 'a miracle has happened' ". Though Gandhiji's experiments had thus deepened his faith in non-violence, he did not make any claim that he had fully understood its nature. " . . . I must warn you," he told the visitor, "against carrying the impression with you that mine is the final word on non-violence. . . . I am but a humble seeker of truth" (pp. 221-2 and 225).

Gandhiji's ahimsa was no mere formal creed but derived its power from the strength of his love for fellow human beings That love made him especially sensitive to the plight of the untouchables. He felt, he said, "deeply humiliated" by the sight of the Pulayas and Pariahs of Travancore (p. 237) and could not understand how the Hindus, "custodians of a great religion", had been "guilty of a crime which," he said, "constitutes our greatest shame." "Had I not been," Gandhiji confessed, "a believer in the inscrutable ways of Providence, a sensitive man like me would have been a raving maniac" (pp. 38-40). When Dr. B. R. Ambedkar proclaimed that the untouchables would leave the Hindu fold, Gandhiji was greatly distressed to see followers of other religions entering into a rivalry with one another to pull this suffering community away from its parent society. Were the Harijans, he asked, "all bricks that they could be moved from one structure to another?" (p. 18) The Harijan masses, he said, were "intertwined with the other Hindus" (p. 46). It therefore hurt him "to find Christian bodies vying with the Muslims and Sikhs in trying to add to the numbers of their fold." It was, he said, "an ugly performance and a travesty of religion. . . . What the missionaries are doing today does not show spirituality" (pp. 35 and 38). He charged them with dangling "earthly paradises" in front of the Harijans and making "promises to them which they can never keep" (p. 18). Criticized by a friend for "violence in words" in this remark, Gandhiji replied: "I regard myself as a friend of the missionaries. I enjoy happy relations with many of them. . . . But if non-violence of thought is to be evolved in individuals or societies or nations, truth has to be told, however harsh or unpopular it may appear to be for the moment" (pp. 152-3). And the truth as it appeared to Gandhiji was that the "American and British money which has been voted for missionary societies has done

more harm than good. You cannot serve God and mammon both. And my fear is that mammon has been sent to serve India and God has remained behind . . ." (pp. 39-40). The missionaries, Gandhiji explained to some Christian visitors, "unconsciously . . . do harm to themselves and so to us. . . . They present a Christianity of their belief but not the message of Jesus as I understand it." "It is," he said, a "tragedy that such a thing should happen in the human family" (p. 98).

Gandhiji's objection was not merely to the motives and methods of the missionaries, but to the very idea of conversion, which he said was "the deadliest poison that ever sapped the fountain of truth" (p. 203). "Why," he asked, "should a Christian want to convert a Hindu to Christianity and vice versa?" What mattered was a person's morals and "insistence on a particular form or repetition of a credo," Gandhiji argued, "may be a potent cause of violent quarrels leading to bloodshed and ending in utter disbelief in religion, i.e., God Himself" (p. 327). The orthodox Christian position, Gandhiji told a Polish professor of philosophy, was "arrogant" (p. 203). For Gandhiji the text that "Jesus is the only begotten son of God" was not literally true and he could not "ascribe exclusive divinity to Jesus". He explained: "If a man is spiritually miles ahead of us we may say that he is in a special sense the son of God, though we are all children of God. We repudiate the relationship in our lives whereas his life is a witness to that relationship" (pp. 397-8). Therefore the correct position was, according to Gandhiji, to accept "all religions as equal, for all have the same root and the same laws of growth" (p. 203). They were "beautiful flowers from the same garden" or "branches of the same majestic tree" and therefore "equally true, though being received and interpreted through human instruments" they were also "equally imperfect" (p. 326). Gandhiji considered it "no business" of his "to criticize the scriptures of other faiths or to point out their defects". But it was and should be, he added, "my privilege to proclaim and practise the truths that there may be in them". Similarly Gandhiji argued that "when non-Hindu critics set about criticizing Hinduism and cataloguing its faults, they only blazon their own ignorance of Hinduism and their incapacity to regard it from the Hindu viewpoint" (p. 332). The right method was to preach through one's life. "The rose," as Gandhiji put it, "does not say 'Come and smell me' " (p. 37). "Your whole life," he said, "is more eloquent than your lips. . . . The moment there is a spiritual expression in life, the surroundings

will readily respond." "When there is no medium between me and my Lord," Gandhiji said, evidently describing beautiful moments of his own experience, "and I simply become a willing vessel for his influences to flow into it, then I overflow as the water of the Ganges at its source. There is no desire to speak when one lives the truth" (pp. 100-1).

When on the Deepavali day the temples in Travancore were thrown open to Harijans by a proclamation of the Maharaja, Gandhiji called the event "a miracle" (p. 27), "the beginning of the process of purification of Hinduism" (p. 244), and he accepted an invitation to visit the State. His nine days' itinerary from January 12 to 21 took him to many towns and villages at each of which he addressed vast assemblages of *savarna* and *avarna* Hindus on the significance of the epoch-making Proclamation, the audiences listening to him in hushed silence. "I have looked upon this Proclamation," Gandhiji said at Trivandrum, "as a pure religious act. I have regarded this visit to Travancore in the spirit of a pilgrimage, and I am going to these temples as an untouchable suddenly made touchable. . . . you will not be satisfied until you have lifted up your brothers and sisters . . . to heights which you have attained yourselves. True spiritual regeneration must include economic uplift and the removal of ignorance and everything that goes to retard human progress" (p. 239)

The most moving moments of the tour for Gandhiji were his visits to the temples. He had, as he said, "mentally and voluntarily become an untouchable and therefore shunned the temples which were barred against fellow untouchables" (pp. 245-6). But now that the bar was removed and he was free to visit the temples, he felt "fascinated" (p. 280). As he entered the first temple, the great Padmanabha temple at Trivandrum, curiosity gave way, Gandhiji said afterwards, "to the incoming of something that was to fill the void of years" and, as they "reached the great central image", he felt that it was all "like a day-dream" (p. 246) He could not, he confessed, restrain his joy at the sight of the "beaming faces" of multitudes who accompanied him, as he went from temple to temple, and mingled together "without the slightest distinction" (p. 257). Gandhiji was aware of the shortcomings of temples (p. 33), but this new experience humbled him and he refused, he said, "to look at it with the eye of a critic" (p. 280). The "scoffers" and "sceptics" might describe religious sentiments of veneration of the images as "figments of imagination", but imagination was

"a powerful factor in life". To the devotees, therefore, the temples were "an integral part" of their lives, "visible symbols of God's power and authority" where "we have to renew our vows of loyalty to God, renew our renunciation and dedication from day to day" (pp. 304-5). They were, as the priest in the Padmanabha temple made him realize, "so many bridges between the Unseen, Invisible and Indefinable God and ourselves who are infinitesimal drops in the Infinite Ocean". Human beings, Gandhiji said, were not all philosophers and were therefore "not satisfied with contemplating the Invisible God. . . . we want something which we can touch, something which we can see, something before which we can kneel down" (p. 238).

Gandhiji based his opposition to untouchability, as he explained in one of his speeches in Travancore, "on the Hindu Shastras and nothing else", having to the best of his ability followed "the tenets of Hinduism for an unbroken period of fifty years" (p. 278). Untouchability, he said, was a "weedy growth upon Hinduism" which "threatened to smother" its "finest flowers" (p. 244), and the most precious of those flowers which Gandhiji had discovered and the truth and beauty of which he proclaimed at meeting after meeting was the first verse of the *Ishopanishad*. Gandhiji translated it thus: "All this that we see in this great Universe is pervaded by God. Renounce it and enjoy it." Or, "Enjoy what He gives you." "Do not covet anybody's wealth or possession" (p. 259). This was "the distilled wisdom of all the sages that lived" (p. 294), "the bedrock of Hinduism without which Hinduism is nothing and with which Hinduism need not be anything else." There was nothing, he said, "so satisfying and beautiful in all the scriptures of the world as this *mantra*" (p. 307). Even the *Gita* was but "a commentary on this *mantra*" (p. 259). If "all the Upanishads and all the other scriptures happened all of a sudden to be reduced to ashes" but only this *mantra* "were left intact in the memory of Hindus, Hinduism," Gandhiji said, "would live for ever" (p. 259). The *Smritis* and Puranas "were all produced or inspired in response to the want of those times" and did not "always express eternal verities". "The eternal verity," Gandhiji said, was "summed up" in this one verse (p. 277). It meant that "to be truly, deliberately and consciously Hindus, we have got to . . . renounce everything, even our body, and all that we hold near and dear to us, and dedicate it at the feet of God" (p. 296), and the wealth of another that the *mantra* enjoined one not to covet did not mean only "money and riches".

"One man's wealth is scholarship," Gandhiji explained to a correspondent, "another's is physical health while that of a third is sacrifice. One should not feel envious of any of these things" (p. 382). Socialism, even communism, Gandhiji said, was "explicit" in this *mantra* (p. 385). It satisfied "the cravings of the socialist and the communist, of the philosopher and the economist", for it at once supplied a grand metaphysical basis for renunciation and an ethical and economic principle of conduct which, if acted upon, would make one "a wise citizen of the world, living at peace with all that lives" (pp. 259-60).

The detachment prescribed by the *Gita* had been Gandhiji's life-long ideal; he believed it to be "absolutely necessary for perfect peace and for the vision of both the little self and the greatest Self", but he admitted that it was "the hardest thing to achieve" (pp. 347-8). The volume contains numerous illustrations of how hard Gandhiji found it to be. He advised Mirabehn, who seems to have complained to him about the behaviour of some of the inmates of the Segaon home: "We do not become impatient over ravings of maniacs. For we treat them as diseases to be tolerated till they are remedied" (pp. 228-9). But Gandhiji's own reaction to a letter from one of those workers was: "Yesterday I laughed at your letter but I could not forget it and now it hurts" (p. 377). Having, in another instance, performed the "painful duty" of commenting in *Harijan* on a former co-worker's letter, Gandhiji said: "May he detect in this writing the anguish of a parent who has suddenly lost an obedient son and repent of the wound he has inflicted on me" (p. 148). Towards his son Harilal Gandhiji found the *Gita's* detachment still harder to cultivate. Harilal had embraced Islam in the preceding May (*vide* Vols. LXII and LXIII) and was now reconverted to Hinduism. Gandhiji's comment was: "I do not remember anything about Harilal. . . . In my eyes Harilal's conversion is meaningless" (p. 26). He could not, nonetheless, help inquiring of a co-worker after him: "I do wish to know . . . what he said on the occasion, where it was and what happened there . . ." (pp. 51-2). And having heard that Kantilal, Harilal's son, had been to see his father and seen there such a tragic sight that he "could not control" his "tears and wept and came away", Gandhiji wrote to the son: "How will you help me by keeping unhappiness from me? I must learn to endure unhappiness and get used to it" (p. 52). He looked upon this suffering as punishment for his "share" in Harilal's "sins". It was not a punishment inflicted by somebody

else. "I am being punished by my own conscience," he said (p. 80). Well and truly could he claim: "Seeing others as oneself is not only a scriptural statement; it has been woven into my life" (p. 56).

Gandhiji believed that whenever a lapse occurred, public confession was "the first step towards purification". "Why should God's creation," he asked, "not see the faults which God sees?" "Those whose failings come to light" should really "be regarded as blessed". Even from a practical point of view, public confession secures one the protection of co-workers against repetition of the error, such protection being in fact "God's protection". "This is," Gandhiji explained, "what is meant by Rama being the strength of the weak" (pp. 130-1). In religious matters, Gandhiji's effort was to reconcile the claims of Reason and Faith. He believed in Faith only "in things where Reason has no place, e. g., the existence of God". "No argument can move me from that faith," he affirmed. Like "that little girl" of Wordsworth's poem "who repeated against all reason 'yet we are seven'," Gandhiji said, he would "like to repeat, on being baffled in argument by a very superior intellect, 'Yet there is God' " (p. 75). One who believes in God, Gandhiji warned a correspondent, should be independent of the spirits with whom "spiritualists" tried to communicate. These spirits were "blind guides leading the blind" and contact with them was "a hindrance between God and ourselves" (p. 6).

Gandhiji looked upon his role as "that of a scavenger both literally and spiritually". "I know," he said, "the outward art of cleaning the streets, commodes and latrines, and I am endeavouring . . . to clean my inside also, so that I may become a faithful interpreter of the truth as I may see it" (p. 256). In this striving Gandhiji's greatest support had been Ramanama. "What I learnt in my childhood," he told a visitor, "has become a huge thing in my firmament. It is a sun that has brightened my darkest hour" (p. 74). To another visitor's question, "What affords you the greatest hope and satisfaction?", Gandhiji replied: "Faith in myself born of faith in God" (p. 39).

NOTE TO THE READER

In reproducing English material, every endeavour has been made to adhere strictly to the original. Obvious typographical errors have been corrected and words abbreviated in the text generally spelt out. Variant spellings of names have, however, been retained as in the original.

Matter in square brackets has been supplied by the Editors. Quoted passages, where these are in English, have been set up in small type and printed with an indent. Indirect reports of speeches and interviews, as also passages which are not by Gandhiji have been set up in small type. In reports of speeches and interviews slight changes and omissions, where necessary, have been made in passages not attributed to Gandhiji

While translating from Gujarati and Hindi, efforts have been made to achieve fidelity and also readability in English. Where English translations are available, they have been used with such changes as were necessary to bring them into conformity with the original.

The date of an item has been indicated at the top right-hand corner; if the original is undated, the inferred date is supplied within square brackets, the reasons being given where necessary. The date given at the end of an item alongside the source is that of publication. The writings are placed under the date of publication, except where they carry a date-line or where the date of writing has special significance and is ascertainable.

References to Volume I of this series are to the January 1969 edition.

In the source-line, the symbol S.N. stands for documents available in the Sabarmati Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad; G.N. refers to documents, M.M.U. to the reels of the Mobile Microfilm Unit and S.G. to the photostats of the Sevagram collection available in the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Sangrahalaya, New Delhi; C.W. denotes documents secured by the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Appendices provide background material relevant to the text. A list of sources and a chronology for the period covered by the volume are also provided at the end.

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1. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

ON THE TRAIN TO BHUSAVAL,
November 3, 1936

MY DEAR IDIOT,

You have been good in that you have been sending me letters without receiving anything from me. I had simply no time after leaving Segaon. And in Ahmedabad I was washed out. Last night there was hardly 3 hours' sleep for I had to detrain at 12 p.m. at Baroda to see the Tyabjis and entrain at 2.30 a.m. for Surat. On the train for Baroda I had to revise Mahadev's notes and so there was no time to sleep on the train. Thank God it is all over and now I have made up for the lost rest. For I have been sleeping off and on since 8.30 a.m. I have commenced attending to correspondence only just now (4 p.m.).

I had a long chat with Lady Vidyagauri, Hansa[1] and others. I had no time to talk to Mridula[2] after the interview and not at all on the Conference matter. I have now written to her.[3]

I am glad S[hummy][4] has agreed to your being with me for two months. Let us hope and pray that you would be all the better in health for being with me. Ba's hut is being built. She went with me from Delhi. She will leave A[hmedabad] today for Bombay and pass about a week with Ramdas who is not keeping extra well. She will be there about a week. Mahadev will also be going to Bombay tonight. He had a touch of fever. I have kept very fit in spite of overwork. I wish you were with me for some functions which were interesting.

I had gone to Rajkot not to see my sister, though she, too, is there. I had gone specially to see my aged cousin[5] and his wife[6], Kanu's[7] grandparents who gave all his [*sic*] children for the cause.

Of course you are going to stay with me in Faizpur.

Both the Segaon patients[8] are doing well. They require hardly

[1] Hansa Mehta

[2] Mridula Sarabhai

[3] The letter is not traceable.

[4] The addressee's brother, Col Shumsher Singh

[5] & [6] Khushalchand Gandhi and Devkunvar

[7] Second son of Narandas Gandhi

[8] Mirabehn and Amritlal T Nanavati; *vide* Vol LXIII, pp 350, 352, 359, 365 and 368.

any nursing. For the most part they are now able to help themselves. What a trial we have all gone through. All's well that ends well.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3750. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G N 6906

2. LETTER TO KASTURBHAI LALBHAI

ON THE TRAIN,
November 3, 1936

BHAI KASTURBHAI,

I have gone through the papers concerning Gordhanbhai's demands. He has no right to ask for the money. Assistance can be given for the labourers' school in Nadiad but its [accounts] should be scrutinized and the school should function under the supervision of the Majoor Mahajan and your association. Such is my firm opinion. The correspondence suggests that, according to the resolution passed, a trust-deed should immediately be made.

I am returning the papers.

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

3. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

SEGAON,
November 4, 1936

CHI. KANAIYO,

Send me the *takli* and some books, such as the *Ramayana*, lying there. I don't find *Meghaduta*, etc., and the small pencil, too, in the luggage. These are not things one should have to search for. When Lilavati comes here she should bring no box, but only useful clothes and other things.

If there are any woollens among my clothes there, I want them.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

4. LETTER TO PARIKSHITLAL L. MAJMUDAR

November 4, 1936

BHAI PARIKSHITLAL,

Concerning the financial position of the Harijan Ashrams, you should start doing as I suggested in my reply. A defeatist outlook here will lead us nowhere. Work should at once begin on the lines I have suggested, and then it should be continued in the manner of the charity box kept in Shriji's temple. I hope you know of Shriji's box.

I am very eager to discuss in *Harijanbandhu* such questions as you have asked but I am not able to manage it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N. 4029 Also C.W. 140 Courtesy: Parikshitlal L. Majmudar

5. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

November 4, 1936

CHI. NARAHARI,

The haste this time, and the crowds, were terrible. So, too, the number of accidents.

I could not even have a look at the Ashram. How could I when my mind was in Segaon?

I keep on receiving complaints from Rajaji. Give him the enclosed letter. I have asked Joshi of Bhavnagar to discuss his scheme with you. It will be very nice if there is something worth while in it. Let me know.

Deliver the accompanying letters.

It still pricks me that I was not able to spend some time with the girls.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9099

6. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON,
November 5, 1936

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Well, I returned yesterday in good order and condition and found both the patients in a fit condition.

I hope you got my letter[1] written on the train and posted at Bhusaval.

No more time to say more.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3751. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6907

7. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

November 5, 1936

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I had been anxiously awaiting your letter which I got today. I read it myself and there was hardly a word which I could not decipher. Tell Bari[2] that I did get the honey but did not realize that it was sent by him. Hope he is all right.

I follow what you say about your health. I told you that you could come to Segaon when you got well. How does it mean that you should not do Khurshedbehn's work? I should be glad if you did. I do give you the permission to come but I shall like it better if you take up Khurshedbehn's work. What I should like most is for you to be fully recovered. Even the nails should be healthy. You will be able to share other people's sufferings if you yourself are healthy. If you don't regain health, you will make others suffer for you.

Ba will pay a visit there. There is good news from Delhi. Manu is there.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 360

[1] *Vide* p. 1.

[2] Abdul Bari, addressee's brother

8. *LETTER TO J. P. BHANSALI*

November 5, 1936

CHI. BHANSALI,

I was very glad to have your letter. I certainly do not want you to give up any of your vows. But a vow means a good vow, i.e., one fit to be taken. Your vow to eat only uncooked starchy foods is a bad one. One who eats unripe bananas would be regarded a monster. You should know that it is the same in the case of uncooked wheat. Why should you withhold anything when you have entrusted everything to me? When you have enough faith to entrust your future to me why can't you entrust your present, too? I do expect penance not only from you but from all. I am, therefore, not asking you to pamper the palate when I ask you without hesitation to make some necessary changes in your diet. On the contrary I want you to build up your body so as to exact hard work from you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

9. *LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR*

November 5, 1936

BHAI BAPA,

I didn't of course get the Gujarati letter, but I got the English one today. The wire will be despatched tomorrow and this, too, will be posted only tomorrow.

I feel that even writing a confidential letter is very risky. Whatever we want to do can be done only after the proclamation[1] is issued. And even after it is, it will be befitting to have the celebration only in Travancore. It would be too much to give it too big a publicity outside the State. However, we shall be able to organize a movement all over India if the proclamation

[1] By the Maharaja of Travancore, throwing open temples to Harijans; *vide* "An Example for Hindu Princes and Their Advisers", pp 45-8

is up to our expectations. Whatever it may be, we should not be impatient. For my part I don't at all believe that all temples will be thrown open. It will not be dharma but a mere administrative measure if the main temples are not thrown open. Calculating policy has no place in dharma. We must show a sense of proportion.

BAPU

[PS.]

A copy of the telegram[1] is enclosed.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1171

10. LETTER TO VAKIL

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 6, 1936

MY DEAR VAKIL,

I am thankful for your transparent letter just received. I have been in touch with spiritualists for years including, I think, Rishi. I do not disbelieve their experiences. But I know that the spirits which talk to them are themselves not infallible. They are blind guides leading the blind. It is of no moment that they say they are not harmed by these conversations. That the spiritualists who hold them are harmed I see daily. I have painful experiences of some of them becoming unhinged and those who seem to have retained their faculties have certainly suffered weakness of mind.

If one has faith in God, one should be independent of these spirits than whom there are undoubtedly higher orders of beings. Contact with these spirits is a hindrance between God and ourselves. I may not carry this argument any further.

I would like to know why your guide misguided you and became the cause of so much anxiety to others.

Your letter shall be treated as you desire. Do you wish it to be withheld from Mahadev, Pyarelal, and the like? Your wishes shall be strictly respected.

Yours,
BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] This is not traceable.

11. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

November 6, 1936

CHI. NARAHARI,

I am enclosing Lalji's letter. Ponder over it. In the first place, Lalji has to divorce that girl. We should speak to her parents, and also to the girl. We should speak to Lalji's father also. I feel that it was improper on the part of Lakshmi to have spoken directly to Lalji. I don't think we should agree to the proposal too readily. If everything is done rightly, the alliance won't hurt me. I cannot understand why Mama[1] gave in. Make a thorough inquiry and write to me. Do consult Lakshmidas, Parikshitlal and others.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9100

12. LETTER TO LALJIBHAI

November 6, 1936

CHI. LALJI,

I have sent your letter to Naraharibhai. Tell him everything. The task is not as easy as you think it is. The only thing you have to take into consideration is the well-being of the girl. You should also take into account the feelings of your parents and her parents. Why should you not be satisfied with that girl? What is your objection to her? You have learnt the dharma of self-restraint. Tell me, would I have any objection if this contemplated union was in keeping with the needs of propriety?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3297

[1] V. L. Phadke

13. TELEGRAM TO R. SRINIVASAN

[After *November 6, 1936*][1]

MY ADVICE MISUNDERSTOOD. WHILST I REPEAT ADVICE TENDERED TO HARIJANS I DARE NOT INTERFERE WITH POLITICAL BODIES WHO ARE APPROACHED BY HARIJANS FOR GUIDANCE DURING ELECTIONS. IT IS FOR YOU TO PRODUCE ATMOSPHERE OF SUCH CONFIDENCE THAT NO MORE THAN FOUR MOST DESERVING MEMBERS WILL APPEAR FOR THE PANEL.

The Hindu, 20-11-1936

14. SILK AND COTTON

There is a subtle rivalry going on just now between hand-manufactured silk and khadi hand-made from cotton. So far as the A. I. S. A. is concerned the matter was settled long ago. Certified khadi stores were permitted to stock indigenous silk cloth only to attract more customers for khadi and to enable the stores to make up somewhat for loss on khadi by charging fancy prices for silk cloth. The line was often overstepped by over-zealous store-keepers but never with the approval of the A. I. S. A. Now the manufacturers of silk cloth have discovered that they can easily displace Andhra khadi because they can afford to undersell Andhra saris, and now silk merchants are to be found defying the A. I. S. A. in pushing their wares. So far nothing can be said against these merchants for no one is bound to respect the policy of the A. I. S. A. unless its virtue is recognized. But in Bombay as elsewhere, too, perhaps, silk merchants have been found doing their business so as to lead the credulous public to believe that they, the merchants, are doing their business with the approval of the A. I. S. A. and in the interest of khadi.

It is necessary, therefore, to warn the public against being deceived by such devices. The public should know that the A.I.S.A. has adopted no arbitrary policy. Trade in indigenous silk had not died out when khadi revival was ushered in. Khadi

[1] This was in reply to the addressee's telegram of November 6, regarding the interference of the Congress in the Scheduled Castes elections.

can give employment to crores whereas silk hardly to more than a few thousand. Khadi is a necessity for both the poor and the rich. Silk is a necessity for none but a few who, in order to nourish a religious sentiment, insist on silk garments on certain occasions. Hence when it is a question of choice between silk and khadi, naturally those who have the welfare of starving millions at heart will always choose khadi. And the very object of the All-India Spinners' Association requires it to give the first place always to khadi made of cotton. I say khadi made of cotton in order to avoid confusion in the minds of those who have seen the wider definition of khadi as being cloth hand-spun and hand-woven out of cotton, silk or wool. This wide definition was and is necessary in order to cover woollen and silken hand-spuns when the latter two are used not to supplant cotton hand-spuns but to supplement them. Thus in winter many people want the warmer woollen or silken stuff.

No one need run away with the idea that the policy I have advocated in these lines disregards the welfare of silk spinners and weavers. Nothing can be farther from my thoughts than this. For I know that if khadi dies, indigenous silk dies automatically. Japanese silk and the artificial imitation from the West will sweep every piece of indigenous cloth out of existence. It is the khadi spirit which has enabled Kashmir woollens and Bengal-Assam silks to hold their own. It is the far-seeing policy of the A.I.S.A. which in protecting cotton khadi against all odds automatically protects indigenous hand-spuns made of wool or silk. Put the three in competition with one another and you dig the grave of all the three. Lastly, let it be remembered that if cotton khadi lives but silk dies, the hands left idle due to the death of silk can easily take up cotton spinning and weaving, but if silk displaces cotton, it cannot employ the crores that will be without occupation or chance of it due to the death of cotton khadi. It seems to me, therefore, to be the obvious duty of all lovers of *Daridranarayana* to prefer cotton khadi always when the question of making a choice confronts them. It will be economical in the long run to pay for the present dearer prices for fine cotton khadi than for the corresponding fine silk wear.

Harijan, 7-11-1936

15. ONE THING NEEDFUL

The one thing needful for effective Harijan service and, for that matter, all service of the poor, the forlorn, the helpless, is purity of personal character in the servant. Without it possession of even the highest intellectual ability and administrative capacity is of no account. It may even prove a hindrance, whereas possession of a pure character combined with love of such service will assuredly develop or provide the requisite intellectual and administrative capacity. This reflection is prompted by the discovery of very painful instances of grave moral lapses on the part of two well-known workers in the Harijans' cause. They were both regarded by all who knew them to be above suspicion and of unsullied character. They have both been betrayed into conduct unworthy of those occupying the positions they did. They were no doubt victims of lust that was hiding like a deadly snake in a dark corner of their hearts. But poor mortals that we are, we cannot read into others' hearts. We can but, and we must, judge other fellow men by their acts which we can see and handle. In these two cases they are such as to make it impossible for them to remain as workers in the Harijan Sevak Sangh. This would be no punishment. Their withdrawal would be necessary for the protection of the Sangh and its cause if not also for themselves. I can safely say that it will be unnecessary for the Sangh to take any step against them. These workers will themselves retire from the Sangh and, I hope, from all public activity. The duty of service is denied to none. A person who has had a grievous moral fall but has come to his senses will serve no matter where he is placed. His very reformation will be a service of society. But performance of such service that comes of itself and is rendered almost secretly is wholly different from being in an organization and enjoying all its privileges. For such re-entry into public life a complete restoration of public confidence is absolutely necessary.

There is in modern public life a tendency to ignore altogether the character of a public worker so long as he works efficiently as a unit in an administrative machinery. It is said that everybody's character is his own private concern. Though I have known this view to have been often taken I have never

been able to appreciate, much less to adopt, it. I have known the serious consequences overtaking organizations that have counted private character as a matter of no consequence. Nevertheless the reader will have observed that for my immediate purpose I have restricted the application of my proposition only to organizations like the Harijan Sevak Sangh which make themselves trustees for the welfare of the dumb millions. I have no manner of doubt that possession of a spotless character is the indispensable requisite of such service. Workers in the Harijan cause or for khadi or for village industries must come in closest touch with utterly unsophisticated, innocent, ignorant men and women who might be likened to children in intelligence. If they have not character, they must fail in the end and for ever damn the cause they espouse in the surroundings in which they are known. I write from experience of such cases. Happily they are rare enough for the numbers engaged in such services, but frequent enough to call for public warning and caution on the part of organizations and workers who are engaged in such services. These last cannot be too watchful or too exacting of themselves.

Harijan, 7-11-1936

16. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 7, 1936

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your letter. I hope this will reach you in Simla.

It is joyous news that S[hummy] denied himself aspirin for full one week and you were gracious enough to have only two tabloids during the whole Simla season. Let us hope now you won't need even two during your lifetime which extend to 100 years.

Your sales of khadi certainly went beyond even my expectations. All this due to the effort of a mere woman—frail in body and idiot mentally ! ! ! No wonder poor khadi workers in Simla are trembling over the prospect of your absence during the next Simla season. But we need not worry about the future which is in God's hands. *You* will give a good account of yourself no matter where you are.

Nanavati is so well that he is leaving today to pass a few days among the members of his family and friends whilst he is gaining strength. He is a wonderful worker. Mira is chirpy. Balwant Singh is weak. He must overwork himself and take chapati even when he must not.

You were extravagant in buying the thermos, the magnificent apples. But you would not be a Rajkumari if you were not extravagant. You are none the less so because you spend on others. If you counted yourself a trustee, as you should, of all you possess including your body, you would be balanced in using them even for your trust. You may not philosophically smile this simple truth away. Remember the value of a rupee in terms of the poor. It means 64 solid meals which millions do not have. Many in Segaon live on a rupee per month, i.e., only two meals a day costing one pice each. But millions do not get this much. How can you and I, knowing this as well as that I am writing this, mis-spend a pice? Will you be wise for a while? If you will become the—or a—woman of my imagination, you will have to develop all your faculties, not excluding account-keeping. And how about your Hindi?

Will you send me a good portable copy of Granth Sahib in Hindi with translation? No hurry and not an expensive volume. If getting a cheap copy is beneath your princess-like dignity or your capacity, you must leave this commission alone.

I gave Ku[marappa]'s manuscript to Mira for criticism. She read it carefully and has given me her notes. She thought it was heavy, but terse enough, some parts not convincing. I am glad you have revised it. I wanted to pass on M[ira]'s notes to Ku[marappa]. But I had no time. If it is not given to the printers, and I find the time, I shall go through the thing myself.

Enough for the day.

Love.

ROBBER

[PS.]

Andrews coming here soon.

Isn't this good paper?

From the original: C.W. 3598. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6407

17. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

November 7, 1936

DEAR DAUGHTER AMTUL SALAAM,[1]

Arrange to send me through Bari or otherwise a copy of the Koran with Urdu translation by return of post. If you cannot get hold of a spare copy, send me the one you have with translation.

I expect you are well now. Nanavati is leaving for Bombay today.

Ba must have arrived there. You are not to go to see her. I have written to her to call on you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 361

18. LETTER TO SHANKERLAL BANKER

November 7, 1936

CHI. SHANKERLAL,

I went through the notice issued on behalf of the Majoor Mahajan. It is all right. Be very watchful of every step you take and having taken it you should not waver.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] The superscription is in Urdu.

19. LETTER TO BHARATAN KUMARAPPA

SEGAON,
November 8, 1936

MY DEAR BHARATAN,

I was about to write to you about the permission given to Kanu & Co. to cook their food. But Kanu mentioned today your remark made to him. Hence this letter now. Your remark was fully justified. The request had come to me before I went to Benares. I pooh-poohed it then. It was repeated on my return with greater emphasis. The reason was indifferent health. I believed it and capitulated. This is no separate kitchen. They want no facilities involving expense. They need no separate kitchen building and they must not take in guests on any account whatsoever. At the same time I have told Zaverbhai that he should not rest content with the withdrawal of these young men from his kitchen. He must so arrange that he can find suitable food for them.

Is my position clear and sound?

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 3594

20. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

November 8, 1936

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

You have entirely stopped writing to me because of my tours. I returned on the 4th and am writing this after waiting for your letter. Both the patients are well. Nanavati left for Bombay yesterday to see the members of his family. Ba is in Bombay. Nimu[1] has become quite weak. Vasumati has come to Segaon for a few days. Khan Saheb and Mehrtaj are of course with me. Lilavati is at Maganwadi and will be at Segaon in about a week.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3485

[1] Nirmala Gandhi, wife of Ramdas Gandhi

21. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 9, 1936

MY DEAR REBEL,

You are nasty and of little faith. Why should you always know that your letters are welcome? Taken to its logical extent, it means that you have always to wire whether your letter will be welcome. Why can you not take it for granted?

So somehow or other you have succeeded in sending me an instrument case! I shall prize it when I receive it and forgive the expense of sending the yarn which shall be looked after as desired by you.

Andrews must be in Wardha today.

I wish I was with you to supervise your packing. I should make short work of many of your things and ease your burden for the rest of your life. But now you must be in Jullundur unpacking.

Meher Taj is with me. She seems to be flourishing. Do write to her and send her letter with mine.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3752. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur Also G.N. 6908

22. LETTER TO NANDALAL BOSE

November 9, 1936

DEAR NANDA BABU,

Here is a wire from Shri Ambalal. What is to be done? You will excuse the left-hand writing. The right needs rest.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 9796

23. LETTER TO VITHALDAS

November 9, 1936

CHI. VITHAL,

All were surprised and happy to see the excellent contribution you made in the spinning *yajna* arranged on the occasion of Rentia Barash[1]. May you live long, make progress in the art of spinning and become a true servant of the poor.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

24. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

November 9, 1936

CHI. NARANDAS,

It is good that you wrote to me. The letter[2] for Vithal is enclosed herewith. Give him a spinning-wheel worth about Rs. 5 or khadi or books of the same value, whichever he prefers. If you find Rs. 5 too much, then make it less.

It was Vallabh's suggestion to take Balkrishna to Jamnagar. I accepted it deliberately as I like sun-bath treatment which I understand is given to everyone at Jamnagar. I would rather that Balkrishna was given drugs orally than through injections. As Balkrishna has no preference of his own, the whole burden rests on me. I thought it proper to accept the Jamnagar suggestion which happened to present itself. I thought it a duty to do at least this much for Balkrishna, seeing that I had to do much more for others who showed themselves more impatient. Ultimately the hut is there as the last resort. However, if Talwalkar insists and he is not cured by the time, his treatment will have to be tried.

I have sent the clarification about the purse for *Harijanbandhu*.[3]

[1] *Bhadarva Vad* 12, Gandhiji's birthday according to the Vikram calendar

[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

[3] *Vide* "Kathiawar Purse for *Daridranarayana*", 29-11-1936.

I would be glad if you take up the khadi activity in Kathiawar. Maganlal Patel was chosen because an uncle only in name is better than no uncle. If you take up the work in Kathiawar and do not ask for any financial help from the central office of the Sangh, you will be able to organize your activities as you wish. You ought to have the zest and be able to see your way clearly. If you take up the work, you may perhaps be able to get more help from the Indian States. You may even make Ramjibhai take interest in the work again. For my part I leave everything to you.

I could not recognize Tara. I shall of course write to her.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]
Won't you put someone under Lakshmi Prasad to learn something about medicinal herbs?

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W 8510 Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

25. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

November 9, 1936

CHI. AMRITLAL,

I just got your card at 7.15. I also had the note sent from Maganwadi. I shall see what to do about the honey and the bottle. I should have given you *khakharis*[1] for the journey. You should increase your diet gradually. I think your weight is all right and for the present you should go up by at least 2 lb. per week. I hope you are getting fairly good fruit there.

Things here go on well. I allowed Mirabehn to have four *khakharis* this evening.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI AMRITLAL NANAVATI
BHADARAN BHAVAN
MALAD, B.B. & C.I. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G.N. 10722

[1] Thin, crisp chapatis made out of wheat flour

26. DISCUSSION WITH C. F. ANDREWS[1]

[On or after *November 9, 1936*][2]

GANDHIJI: Their behaviour has been as bad as that of the rest who are in the field to add to their numbers. What pains one is their frantic attempt to exploit the weakness of Harijans. If they said, 'Hinduism is a diabolical religion and you come to us,' I should understand. But they dangle earthly paradises in front of them and make promises to them which they can never keep. When in Bangalore[3] a deputation of Indian Christians came to me with a number of resolutions which they thought would please me, I said to them: 'This is no matter for bargain. You must say definitely that this is a matter to be settled by the Hindus themselves. Where is the sense of talking of a sudden awakening of spiritual hunger among the untouchables and then trying to exploit a particular situation? The poor Harijans have no mind, no intelligence, no sense of difference between God and no-God. It is absurd for a single individual to talk of taking all the Harijans with himself. Are they all bricks that they could be moved from one structure to another? If Christian Missions here want to play the game, and for that matter Mussalmans and others, they should have no such idea as that of adding to their ranks whilst a great reform in Hinduism is going on.'

C. F. A. Let me ask one question. I said in Australia that all the talk of Dr. Ambedkar and his followers was not in terms of religion, and I said also that it was cruelty to bargain with unsophisticated people like the Harijans as they are in most parts of India. Then came the London Missionary Society's statement that the Ezhavas in Travancore had asked for Christian instruction. I said then that the Ezhavas were quite enlightened and if they had really asked to be instructed in Christianity, it would be an entirely different matter. Was I right?

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter". Andrews had just returned from a visit to New Zealand, Fiji and Australia and had been, since his return, in correspondence with various missionaries. He wanted to know Gandhiji's reaction to the attitude of the missionaries.

[2] According to *Gandhi—1915–1948: A Detailed Chronology*, Andrews arrived in Segaon on November 9. *Vide* also "Letter to Amrit Kaur", p. 15.

[3] Gandhiji was in Bangalore from 31-5-1936 to 13-6-1936.

GANDHIJI: I do not think so. Whilst there are individual Ezhavas who are doctors and barristers and so on, the vast majority of them are just the same as the Harijans elsewhere. I can assure you that no one representing the vast body of Ezhavas could have asked for Christian instruction. You should ascertain the fact from our principal workers there.

C. F A. I see what you mean. Only I wanted to say that the London Missionary Society was a liberal body and would not make an irresponsible statement

GANDHIJI: But they at the centre cannot know, as the Parliament cannot know the truth of what is happening in India.

C. F. A. But that apart, I should like to discuss the fundamental position with you What would you say to a man who after considerable thought and prayer said that he could not have his peace and salvation except by becoming a Christian?

GANDHIJI: I would say that if a non-Christian, say a Hindu, came to a Christian and made that statement, he should ask him to become a good Hindu rather than find goodness in change of faith.

C F A. I cannot in this go the whole length with you, though you know my own position I discarded the position that there is no salvation except through Christ long ago. But supposing the Oxford Group Movement people changed the life of your son, and he felt like being converted, what would you say?

GANDHIJI: I would say that the Oxford Group may change the lives of as many as they like, but not their religion. They can draw their attention to the best in their respective religions and change their lives by asking them to live according to them. There came to me a man, the son of Brahmin parents, who said his reading of your book had led him to embrace Christianity. I asked him if he thought that the religion of his forefathers was wrong. He said 'No.' Then I said: 'Is there any difficulty about your accepting the Bible as one of the great religious books of the world and Christ as one of the great teachers?' I said to him that you had never through your books asked Indians to take up the Bible and embrace Christianity, and that he had misread your book—unless of course your position is like that of the late Maulana Mahomed Ali's, viz., that a believing Mussalman, however bad his life, is better than a good Hindu.

C. F. A. I do not accept Maulana Mahomed Ali's position at all. But I do say that if a person really needs a change of faith I should not stand in his way

GANDHIJI: But don't you see that you do not even give him a chance? You do not even cross-examine him. Supposing a Christian came to me and said he was captivated by a reading of the *Bhagavata* and so wanted to declare himself a Hindu, I should say to him: 'No. What the *Bhagavata* offers the Bible also offers. You have not yet made the attempt to find it out. Make the attempt and be a good Christian.'

C. F. A. I don't know. If someone earnestly says that he will become a good Christian, I should say, 'You may become one,' though you know that I have in my own life strongly dissuaded ardent enthusiasts who came to me. I said to them, 'Certainly not on my account will you do anything of the kind.' But human nature does require a concrete faith.

GANDHIJI: If a person wants to believe in the Bible let him say so, but why should he disregard his own religion? This proselytization will mean no peace in the world. Religion is a very personal matter. We should, by living the life according to our light, share the best with one another, thus adding to the sum total of human effort to reach God.

Consider whether you are going to accept the position of mutual toleration or of equality of all religions. My position is that all the great religions are fundamentally equal. We must have the innate respect for other religions as we have for our own. Mind you, not mutual toleration, but equal respect.

Harijan, 28-11-1936

27. LETTER TO J. P. BHANSALI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 11, 1936

CHI. BHANSALI,

I enjoy writing to you. Do spin if your body can bear the strain. Continue *moong* and rice for the present.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

28. LETTER TO MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

November 11, 1936

CHI. MAGANBHAI,

I have been able to use your letter to the full. Get hold of Harbhai's monthly and send it to me.

By a happy coincidence, just as I was leaving, Jivanji put into my hands your work *Sukhmani* and Kaka's *Jivanno Anand.* When I started on *Sukhmani* it so engaged my attention that I could not put it down. I write this after finishing it—except for the "Ashtapadis". I did that in the "Library". What else could I have done? I have now begun reading the "Ashtapadis" too! But that I will do at my leisure. I like your exposition very much. . . .'s[1] translation is good and beautiful. In the language of your essays I feel there is something lacking, though I cannot lay my finger on it. However I found your translation of the essays of Puran Singh and Vaswani quite pleasing. Only you can tell why it should be so, or maybe it is only my feeling. This is, however, an unimportant point and your book is useful for students as also others.

You have done well in raising a doubt about the words which McAuliffe puts into Guru Arjun's mouth on the subject of the Shastras. McAuliffe has no doubt put in great labour into his work. But I suspected him as far back as 1922 when I read all his chapters in jail. Later I heard that it was thanks to him that Hindus and Sikhs became disunited. You should write a Sikh history if you have the time and can do the necessary reading. You have to read a vast amount of literature on the subject for the purpose, move among the Sikhs, ransack the library of the Khalsa community and meet Sir Joginder Singh. Probably you know that he is a great writer. It is not a small thing to write a good history. I greatly appreciate your study as revealed in *Sukhmani*. I see that you are interested in the subject and therefore you may be able to undertake the task. A superficial book will not satisfy me. Maybe for many years

[1] The name is illegible in the source.

to come this is the work cut out for you. In that case "Better is death in the discharge of one's duty".[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9066

29. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

November 11, 1936

CHI. KANAIYO,

When will you write to me? I have been expecting your letter daily.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

30. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 12, 1936

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your letter.

Why are you in a hurry to send me the shawl? Whenever it comes, depend upon it I shall wear it. Therefore deliver it yourself or send it through someone who may be coming and save the postage for a better purpose.

I won't be any party to your becoming a miser nor can I tolerate criminal extravagance at the expense of the poor. But of all such things more when we meet.

There are one or two things missing in your beautiful and needful case. One of the khaddar pieces was used to dress anew Andrews's hernia belt. Ba came in today. She is happy. Her cottage is making steady progress. Andrews went to Nagpur and returns on Saturday or thereabout.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3753. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6909

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, III. 35

31. LETTER TO MANU GANDHI

November 12, 1936

CHI. MANUDI[1],

You seem to have grown lazy. Why don't I have any letters from you? I could stay at Rajkot for just a few hours. I reached there in the morning and left at night. I had a long meeting with Bali[2] and Kumi[3]. Aunt[4] too had come. I missed you much at Ahmedabad. Ba arrived here today bringing Kana[5] with her. Lilavati too will come, though she may perhaps have to go back on account of her brother. Vasumati is here. She will leave for Bochasan in two or three days.

If you are not specially needed there and if you wish to come here you may do so. A companion for the journey will not be difficult to get. Khan Saheb and Mehertaj are of course still here.

Mirabehn is all right. Nanavati has gone to his brother's at Malad.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 1560. Courtesy: Manubehn S. Mashruwala

32. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

November 12, 1936

CHI. DEVDAS,

The enclosed is for Manudi. Send her here if you do not particularly need her there. Read my letter to her.

The accompanying letter will tell you if you do not already know of Harilal's latest exploit.[6] I do not attach any value to his letter. It seems he is not getting any money from there either. Maybe, too, he is tired of the whole thing. After

[1] Harilal Gandhi's daughter

[2] & [3] Balibehn M. Adalaja and Kumibehn T. Maniar, addressee's aunts

[4] Gandhiji's sister Raliatbehn

[5] Kanam Gandhi, Gandhiji's grandson and Ramdas Gandhi's son

[6] The reference is to Harilal Gandhi's public statement of November 10, 1936, that he was seriously thinking of adopting Hinduism again.

I had torn up the letter it occurred to me that probably you had not come across it, so I decided to send you the pieces.

Write to me about your health and Lakshmi's[1]. Hope the children are well. Nimu has been quite ill at Bombay.

Do you go for walks? Do you take your meals regularly? You must do these two things.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2034

33. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

November 12, 1936

CHI. JAISUKHLAL

I got both your letters. I went through the account of Ramjibhai's new activity from beginning to end. He is hard-working. Therefore his activities are bound to bear good fruit. I hope his faith in khadi has not diminished. I got the feeling that he was exhausted somewhat. Show him this letter and ask him to write to me. What is the news about Umia[3]?

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI JAISUKHLAL GANDHI
RAMBAG, DHARI
KATHIAWAD

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

34. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

November 12, 1936

CHI. AMRITLAL,

Your letter is very good. My right hand needs rest. I consider . . .'s[4] error a serious one. There is certainly no place for guess-work in the matter of food. One should know for certain every item one eats. If you have the necessary facility

[1] Addressee's wife

[2] Gandhiji's nephew and father of Manubehn Gandhi, who was with Gandhiji during his last two years

[3] Addressee's daughter

[4] The name is omitted in the source.

have hip-bath early in the morning and then go out for a walk. Eat after that. Mirabehn has her bath at 5.45 a.m.; then walks two to three miles and after that she takes milk, etc.

Now keep up the quantity of *rotli*, ghee and leafy vegetables in your diet and increase gradually the intake of milk and curd up to 3 lb. Do not give up garlic. Take whatever honey is available there. See if you can get it in the Khadi Bhandar. However, if grapes are available honey is not so necessary. For my part, these days I take jaggery, which you saw here, with water. I may be taking about two *tolas* of it. I like it, but you should do whatever suits you.

I shall see about Gajanand. Now we are finding things here interesting. The experiments continue. Do not give up yours.

Harilal's letter has no effect on me. The motive behind it is to get money out of me. However, I would not be surprised if doing that he should come to his senses one day. Of course you did well in writing to me as I knew nothing of it before I got your letter.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G.N. 10723

35. TELEGRAM TO C. P. RAMASWAMI IYER

WARDHA,
[On or after *November 12, 1936*][1]

I TENDER HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS TO HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA ON HIS GREAT PROCLAMATION[2] OF FREEDOM FOR HARIJANS.

The Hindu, 17-11-1936

[1] The proclamation by the Travancore Durbar was issued on November 12

[2] For the text of the proclamation, *vide* pp 45-6.

36. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

[On or after *November 12, 1936*]

I tender my congratulations to the Travancore Durbar and their advisers on this overdue fulfilment of the duty of a Hindu Prince as I have always conceived it to be. I hope that this good proclamation will be carried out in letter and spirit so that Harijans may feel the glow of freedom and real oneness with their caste brethren and I hope that all other Hindu Princes will follow the noble example set by this far-off ancient Hindu State.

The Hindu, 14-11-1936

37. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

[After *November 12, 1936*][1]

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

What can I do? I do not remember anything about Harilal. Why should you not write short letters?

1. You may go to see Harilal. You can take Ramdas or anybody else to accompany you. I hope no one will prevent you. In my eyes Harilal's conversion is meaningless.

2. I expect Kanti came to see you. It is not as if I forbade him thinking that you were no good, but he himself does not want to see you. He does not wish to enter into argument with you. What then is the sense in your insisting on seeing him? Think of Kanti's happiness and calm down.

3. I would soon send for you if I could improve your health by having you with me, but I just don't believe I can.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 602

[1] From the reference to Harilal's conversion. According to *Gandhi—1915-1948*, Harilal became converted to Hinduism again about this date.

38. *AN INTERVIEW*[1]

[After *November 12, 1936*][2]

The modern miracle in Travancore is mainly due to the influence of women, or if you please, to the influence of one woman, Her Highness the Maharani of Travancore. When I was in Travancore some years ago[3], I met the Maharani. She was determined to do what was the purest act of justice, and it is she who is really at the back of the Maharaja's decision. It was a most courageous act to issue the proclamation and still more courageous to carry it out to the letter. The Maharaja could not have done it without the support of his mother. So I see the hand of woman in this miracle.

The opening of temples would not have been possible without the widest co-operation of the caste Hindus. It is a unique demonstration of the power of non-violence. I had thought that the State would at least have to post a strong police force at the main temples, and that at least a few heads would be broken. The process began with the biggest State temple, the one that the Maharaja visits himself. There was no political pressure here. It could not be imposed on a million people. I had no idea that there were nearly 2,000 temples in Travancore. I only knew that ten years ago our volunteers had been severely hammered for even crossing a forbidden road near the temple at Vaikom. Now the humblest of the humble have entered the Vaikom temple without the slightest difficulty. The proclamation did not enthuse me, though it was a solid thing. For I had feared that there might be a political motive behind it. But all my fears have been dispelled. That the orthodoxy, who used to swear by the letter of the ritual and made so much of the efficacy of temple worship being destroyed by even the shadow of a pariah, would fall in with the proclamation, is a thing I was not prepared for, so soon at any rate. But God has made possible what man could not have done.

Mahatma, Vol. IV, pp. 103-5

[1] The identity of the interviewer, an American woman, is not given in the source.

[2] From the reference to the proclamation issued by the Maharaja of Travancore, throwing open all State temples to Harijans

[3] In 1927; *vide* Vol. XXXV, pp 102-3

39. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 13, 1936

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I got your long letter. I feel very sorry for Bari's health. What is the reason of his ill-health? I got the honey and fruit as also the Koran. Why did you send the fruit? If you have so much money, why don't you send it to me?

It will be very good if you can settle the quarrel between the two brothers. Make an effort. May God help you. How foolish you are! Who said you were bad when you were told not to write to Kanti or see him? Of late I have neither written to him nor got a letter from him. For my part I know no Diwali and how could there be any in Bombay where a holi is raging? I do not like festivals at all. Are we worthy of the festivals?

This is what I think about you. You should stay there, improve your health and then come to me. Where else can you be treated? If you are prepared to go to Bangalore, I can arrange for that. You can certainly get medical aid there. But you will not get anywhere the facilities available in Bombay. Do not even think of observing the Ramzan fast. Get well and then observe as many fasts as you like. I would have allowed you to observe the Ramzan fast at Segaon, had you recovered fully. I shall write a letter to Dinshaw if you want to consult him. What was the point in deciding to go to Mecca and giving it up soon after? I think now you have the answers to all your questions.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 363

40. OBSCENE ADVERTISEMENTS

A sister[1] sending me a cutting from a well-known magazine containing the advertisement of a most objectionable book writes:

> The enclosed came under my eye when glancing over the pages of . . I do not know if you get this magazine I do not suppose you ever have time to glance at it even if it is sent to you Once before I spoke to you about 'obscene advertisements' I do so wish you would write about them some time That books of the type advertised are flooding the market today is only too true, but should responsible journals like . . encourage their sale? My woman's modesty is so utterly repelled by these things that I cannot write to anyone but you To think that what God has given to woman with intent for an express purpose should be advertised for abuse is too degrading for words . . I wish you would write about the responsibility of leading Indian newspapers and journals in this respect This is not the first by any means that I could have sent to you for criticism.

From the advertisement I do not propose to reproduce any portion except to tell the reader that it describes as obscenely as it can the suggestive contents of the book advertised. Its title is *Sexual Beauty of the Female Form* and the advertising firm tells the reader that it will give away free to the buyer two more books called *New Knowledge for the Bride* and *The Sexual Embrace or How to Please Your Partner.*

I fear that in relying on me in any way to affect the course of the advertisers of such books or to move the editors or publishers from their purpose of making their productions yield profits, she relies on a broken reed. No amount of appealing by me to the publishers of the objectionable books or advertisements of them will be of any use. But what I would like to tell the writer of the letter and other learned sisters like her is to come out in the open and to do the work that is peculiarly and specially theirs. Very often a bad name is given to a person and he or she in course of time begins to believe in the badness. To call a woman a member of 'the weaker sex' is a libel. In what way is woman the weaker sex I do not know. If the implication is that she lacks the brute instinct of man or does not

[1] Amrit Kaur; *vide* Vol. LXIII, p. 381.

possess it in the same measure as man, the charge may be admitted. But then woman becomes, as she is, the nobler sex. If she is weak in striking, she is strong in suffering. I have described woman as the embodiment of sacrifice and ahimsa. She has to learn not to rely on man to protect her virtue or her honour. I do not know a single instance of a man having ever protected the virtue of a woman. He cannot even if he would. Rama certainly did not protect the virtue of Sita, nor the five Pandavas of Draupadi. Both these noble women protected their own virtue by the sheer force of their purity. No person loses honour or self-respect but by his consent. A woman no more loses her honour or virtue because a brute renders her senseless and ravishes her than a man loses his because a wicked woman administers to him a stupefying drug and makes him do what she likes.

It is remarkable that there are no books written in praise of male beauty. But why should there always be literature to excite the animal passions of man? May it be that woman likes to live up to the titles that man has chosen to bestow upon her? Does she like to have the beauty of her form exploited by man? Does she like to look beautiful of form before man and why? These are questions I would like educated sisters to ask themselves. If these advertisements and literature offend them, they must wage a relentless war against them and they will stop them in a moment. Would that woman will realize the power she has latent in her for good if she has also for mischief. It is in her power to make the world more livable both for herself and her partner, whether as father, son or husband, if she would cease to think of herself as weak and fit only to serve as a doll for man to play with. If society is not to be destroyed by insane wars of nations against nations and still more insane wars on its moral foundations, the woman will have to play her part not manfully, as some are trying to do, but womanfully. She won't better humanity by vying with man in his ability to destroy life mostly without purpose. Let it be her privilege to wean the erring man from his error which will envelop in his ruin that of woman also. This wretched advertisement is merely a straw showing which way the wind is blowing. It is a shameless exploitation of woman. It would not leave alone even "the beauty of female form of savage races of the world".

Harijan, 14-11-1936

41. *TEMPLE-ENTRY*

A co-worker writes:

A worker in the Harijan cause came in the other day and wanted money for a Harijan temple and school in Phagwara (Jullundur) District) I resolutely refused money for a 'temple', because I am dead against the building of all such, especially exclusive ones for the Harijans, for it is one form of perpetuating their 'untouchability', and just as he was vehemently arguing with me the postman brought in *Harijan* with your article[1] on this theme It was quite a godsend Some sanatanists, I understand, are trying to induce Harijans to build a temple for themselves, so that they need not then claim entry into existing temples The Harijans really need protection in this respect and your article has not come a bit too soon

I had a huge discussion the other day with a mutual acquaintance about your advocating 'temple-entry' for Harijans. The friend maintained:

'(a) The Mahatma never goes to worship in a temple himself, why, then, does he encourage Harijans to do so? For advocating 'temple--entry' is an indirect means of encouraging worship in temples

(b) Our 'temples' are in the vast majority of cases solely means of livelihood for priests who are incapable of earning an honest living in any other way Why encourage them?

(c) To every priest in charge of such temples the entrance of Harijans will mean more money because no one can go to a temple without putting in a pice (minimum)

(d) Why impoverish the Harijan community?

(e) Why can't the Mahatma teach Harijans to worship in the open air as he does himself?'

I do not know if these questions have been specifically put to you by others and whether you have ever answered them and think it worth while doing so I do feel, however, that Harijans must not be allowed to build separate temples for themselves and that the removal of the ban on temple-entry will purify the caste Hindu only. The Harijan has to raise himself in other ways with his own as well as our help

This letter contains the answer, too, to the questions raised therein. Neverthelcss it invites publicity and discussion. These

[1] "Task before Harijan Sevaks", *vide* Vol. LXIII, pp 361-2

questions have been often raised and equally often discussed in these columns in some shape or other.

The worker who wanted a donation for a separate temple for Harijans, and the one who put the various conundrums before the writer of the letter reproduced above, missed the main reason for temple-entry. The demand for opening all temples to the Harijans is made not because the Harijans desire entry, or that when the temples are thrown open to them they will become changed beings. The demand is made for the purification of caste Hindus. It is made because Harijans are deprived wrongfully of a right that belongs to every Hindu. Even though not a single Harijan enters Hindu temples, it is the duty of caste Hindus to throw them open to their brethren the Harijans. It is the truest sign of removal of untouchability from the caste Hindu heart. The other disabilities have undoubtedly to go, but if this one remains untouchability does not die. The civil disabilities will go in course of time, whether caste Hindus wish it or not, but the temples cannot be opened without their free will. There is nothing to prevent a Harijan from drawing water from a public well or demanding at a public school equal treatment with the other pupils. He does not do so today in a vast majority of cases, only because he is yet too timid to assert his legal right. He has reason to be afraid of physical hurt and worse from the caste Hindus. But as he grows from strength to strength, he will certainly assert himself and exercise the right which, owing to his helplessness, he has been hitherto unable to exercise. Not so, however, about temple-entry. If Harijans in a body marched to a temple, they would be prevented by law from entering that temple. Hence the necessity for agitation by caste Hindu reformers for opening their temples to Harijans.

As to temples designed specially for Harijans, I have always opposed such projects. But there have always been reservations. I would not oppose a movement among Harijans themselves for building a temple accessible to both themselves and the caste Hindus. Nor would I oppose the building of such temples by caste Hindus. In other words I do not always oppose the building of temples as such. I think that they play an important and useful part in the lives of millions of people.

That I do not go to the orthodox temples is irrelevant to the issue before us. In order to prove my belief in temples, I need not be a visitor myself. Surely it is enough that I believe in God and offer daily worship not as a mere formality but as an integral part of my spiritual food. Of course I go out of my

way to invite Harijans to attend the daily open-air worship. I do so, however, not to wean them from the desire to visit orthodox temples.

Corruption in the temples there undoubtedly is. The illiteracy and cruel ignorance of the priests in charge of most temples is deplorable. But that is a reason for their reformation, not condemnation to destruction. Nor need Harijans pay anything to the priests. Thousands visit temples without paying even a pie. I verily believe that the movement for the opening of temples to Harijans, when it succeeds, as it must some day not far distant, will sweep the temples clean of any of their glaring abuses.

Harijan, 14-11-1936

42. DISCUSSION WITH JOHN R. MOTT[1]

[*November 13/14, 1936*][2]

JOHN MOTT: You have been one that has given a great initiative to the movement, you have put your life-blood into it, you have suffered and triumphed, and I want you to help me to a profound understanding of what the issues are and tell me how I may help, for I do not want to hinder. What is happening in India is going to have a profound effect on the world. We are in front of forces the influence of which it would be difficult to prophesy or predict Give me your own diagnosis of the problem

GANDHIJI: So far as I am concerned with the untouchability question, it is one of life and death for Hinduism. As I have said repeatedly, if untouchability lives Hinduism perishes, and even India perishes; but if untouchability is eradicated from the Hindu heart root and branch, then Hinduism has a definite message for the world. I have said the first thing to hundreds of audiences, but not the latter part. Now that is the utterance of a man who accepts Truth as God. It is therefore

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's report "Dr Mott's Visit". John Mott was an American evangelist, a prominent Y M C A leader and Chairman, International Missionary Council.

[2] The source gives no date *Vide*, however, "Letter to Amrit Kaur", p. 41, where Gandhiji says: "I gave over four hours to Dr. or Mr. Mott with Andrews between yesterday and today" Mahadev Desai's evidence seems to contradict this He says: "This talk was taking place exactly at the moment when the Travancore Proclamation was being issued" which was on the 12 But Mahadev Desai was writing several days after the talks

no exaggeration. If untouchability is an integral part of Hinduism, the latter is a spent bullet. But untouchability is hideous untruth. My motive in launching the [anti-]untouchability campaign is clear. What I am aiming at is not every Hindu touching an untouchable, but every touchable Hindu driving untouchability from his heart, going through a complete change of heart. Inter-dining or intermarrying is not the point. I may not dine with you, but I ought not to harbour the feeling that if I dined with you I should be polluted. If I was a woman to be married, I should not say 'I cannot marry a man because he is an untouchable.' I am making this clear to you because in the programme of the Harijan Sevak Sangh we say we don't ask the orthodox Hindus to inter-dine or intermarry with the 'untouchables'. Many of us have no scruples about inter-dining or intermarriage. That untouchability is an ancient custom I admit, but there are many such things intertwined with Hinduism because it is an ancient religion, even a prehistoric religion. Instead of being the dead faith that it threatens to be, I want it to be a living faith, so that it may exist side by side with other religions of the world.

With this he explained the genesis of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, and how he could not be a member of the Sangh, and yet that he had directed and guided the policy of the Sangh.

"The world looks upon you," said Dr. Mott, "as a front-line prophet, conscience, initiator and warrior, and we pray that you may be spared long for this most fateful period in the life of the world."

The conversation led to the genesis of the Yeravda Pact[1], beginning with Gandhiji's declaration, at the Round Table Conference, to lay down his life to stop the vivisection of Hinduism.[2]

G. But I had no political axe to grind, I have none. Nor have the other Hindus a political motive. For instance, the Pact has been a kind of bombshell thrown in the midst of Bengalis. They have their own Hindu-Muslim problem which has been rendered difficult by the Yeravda Pact. The original Premier's 'Award'[3], as it was called, gave fewer seats to the Harijans than the Pact gives. It is almost an overwhelming number. But I said Hinduism loses nothing if *all* the seats were captured by the

[1] Of September 1932 between Hindu leaders and the Depressed Classes; *vide* Vol. LI, Appendix II.

[2] *Vide* Vol. XLVIII, p. 298.

[3] This announced the British Government's scheme of providing separate electorate for the Depressed classes. *Vide* also Vol. L. p. 383.

Harijans. I would not alter a comma in the Pact unless the Harijans themselves wanted it.

JOHN MOTT Removal of untouchability is the business of your life-time The importance of this movement lies beyond the frontiers of India, and yet there are few subjects on which there is more confusion of thought. Take for instance the missionaries and missionary societies. They are not of one mind. It is highly desirable that we become of one mind and find out how far we can help and not hinder. I am Chairman of the International Missionary Council which combines 300 missionary societies in the world. I have on my desk reports of these societies, and I can say that their interest in the untouchables is deepening I should be interested if you would feel free to tell me where, if anywhere, the missionaries have gone along wrong lines Their desire is to help and not to hinder.

I cannot help saying that the activities of the missionaries in this connection have hurt me. They with the Mussalmans and the Sikhs came forward as soon as Dr. Ambedkar threw the bombshell, and they gave it an importance out of all proportion to the weight it carried, and then ensued a rivalry between these organizations. I could understand the Muslim organizations doing this, as Hindus and Muslims have been quarrelling. The Sikh intervention is an enigma. But the Christian mission claims to be a purely spiritual effort. It hurt me to find Christian bodies vying with the Muslims and Sikhs in trying to add to the numbers of their fold. It seemed to me an ugly performance and a travesty of religion. They even proceeded to enter into secret conclaves with Dr. Ambedkar. I should have understood and appreciated your prayers for the Harijans, but instead you made an appeal to those who had not even the mind and intelligence to understand what you talked; they have certainly not the intelligence to distinguish between Jesus and Mohammed and Nanak and so on.

Dr. Mott referred to the Archbishop of Canterbury's speech[1], and the talks he had with him, and other bishops and missionary leaders in England, and emphasized the fact that the Christians should in no way seem to be bidding with others for the souls of the Indian people. He said he had a reassurance from the Free as well as the State Church leaders, but in the secular papers it had got abroad that Dr Ambedkar could hand over 50 million people to those who were prepared to accept them He had sensed that it might mean a tremendous disservice. He said: "The most trustworthy leaders of Protestant missionary forces would give to what you have said

[1] *Vide* "What Is a Miracle?", 19-12-1936.

great heed. They do believe increasingly in work for the untouchables. Tell us what we can wisely do and what we cannot wisely do."

G. So far as this desire of Dr. Ambedkar is concerned, you can look at the whole movement with utter calmness and indifference. If there is any answer to Dr. Ambedkar's appeal and if the Harijans and he take the final step and come to you, you can take such steps as your conscience suggests. But today it seems unseemly and precipitate to anticipate what Dr. Ambedkar and Harijans are going to do.

Deenabandhu Andrews referred with condemnation to the Lucknow Conference and Dr. Mott said that what the Conference did was not authoritative.

G. It becomes authoritative owing to the silence of Christian bodies. If they had disowned all that happened it would have been well, but those who met at Lucknow perhaps felt that they were voicing the views of the missionary bodies who, in their opinion, were not moving fast enough.

J. M. But there was a disclaimer.

G. If there was, it did not travel beyond the English Channel.

J. M. But there is a deplorable confusion of thought and divided counsel even amongst friends. The Devil would like nothing better. My life has been mostly spent for the intellectual classes, and I feel very much conscience-moved to help in this movement.

Gandhiji cited the example of good Christians helping by working under the Hindu banner. There was Mr. Keithahn[1] who was trying hard to smooth the path of the untouchables. There were Miss Barr and Miss Madden who had thrown themselves into the rural reconstruction movement. He then adverted to the problem in Travancore where an indecent competition was going on for enticing away the Ezhavas from the Hindu fold.

G. The Ezhavas in Travancore want temple-entry. But it is no use your asking me whether they want temple-entry. Even if they do not want it, I must see that they enjoy the same rights as I enjoy, and so the reformers there are straining every nerve to open the temple doors.

J. M. But must we not serve them?

G. Of course you will, but not make conversion the price of your service.

J. M. I agree that we ought to serve them whether they become Christians or not. Christ offered no inducements. He offered service and sacrifice.

[1] R. R. Keithahn, an American missionary

G. If Christians want to associate themselves with this reform movement they should do so without any idea of conversion.

J. M. Apart from this unseemly competition, should they not preach the Gospel with reference to its acceptance?

G. Would you, Dr. Mott, preach the Gospel to a cow? Well, some of the untouchables are worse than cows in understanding. I mean they can no more distinguish between the relative merits of Islam and Hinduism and Christianity than a cow. You can only preach through your life. The rose does not say: 'Come and smell me.'

J. M But Christ said 'Preach and Teach,' and also that Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God There was a day when I was an unbeliever Then J. E K. Studd of Cambridge, a famous cricketer, visited my University on an evangelistic mission and cleared the air for me. His life and splendid example alone would not have answered my question and met my deepest need, but I listened to him and was converted First and foremost we must live the life; but then by wise and sympathetic unfolding of essential truth we must shed light on processes and actions and attitudes, and remove intellectual difficulties so that it may lead us into the freedom which is freedom indeed You do not want the Christians to withdraw tomorrow?

G. No. But I do not want you to come in the way of our work, if you cannot help us.

J. M. The whole Christian religion is the religion of sharing our life, and how can we share without supplementing our lives with words?

G. Then what they are doing in Travancore is correct? There may be a difference of degree in what you say and what they are doing, but there is no difference of quality. If you must share it with the Harijans, why don't you share it with Thakkarbapa and Mahadev? Why should you go to the untouchables and try to exploit this upheaval? Why not come to us instead?

J M The whole current discussion since the Ambedkar declaration has become badly mixed with other unworthy motives, which must be eliminated. Jesus said· 'Ye shall be witnesses unto Me' A good Christian has to testify what he has experienced in his own life or as a result of his own observation We are not true as His followers, if we are not true witnesses of Christ. He said 'Go and teach and help through the mists and lead them out into larger light.'

Deenabandhu Andrews here asked to be permitted to put forward a concordat. He said. "There are fundamental differences between you and the missionaries, and yet you are the friend of missionaries But you feel that they are not playing the game You want the leaders of the Church to say. 'We do not want to fish in troubled waters, we shall do nothing to imply that we are taking advantage of a peculiar situation that has arisen'"

G. I do not think it is a matter which admits of any compromise at all. It is a deeply religious problem and each should do what he likes. If your conscience tells you that the present effort is your mission, you need not give any quarter to Hindu reformers. I can simply state my belief that what the missionaries are doing today does not show spirituality.[1]

J M What are the governing ideals and aims of this Indian Village Industries movement? What is the object of your settling down in this little village?

G. The immediate object of my stay in Segaon is to remove to the best of my ability the appalling ignorance, poverty and the still more appalling insanitation of the Indian villages. All these really run into one another. We seek to remove ignorance not through imparting the knowledge of the alphabet by word of mouth, but by giving them object-lessons in sanitation, by telling them what is happening in the world, and so on.

J M What you are doing here has great industrial significance. Japan with about as high a rate of literacy as any country in the world is not exempt from the sins of industrialism.

G. But I am not seeking to industrialize the village. I want to revive the village after the ancient pattern, i.e., to revive hand-spinning, hand-ginning, and its other vital handicrafts. The village uplift movement is an offshoot of the spinning movement. So great was my ignorance in 1908 that I mixed up the spinning-wheel with the loom in my small book on Indian Home Rule[2].

J. M What is the cause of your greatest concern, your heaviest burden?

G. My greatest worry is the ignorance and poverty of the masses of India, and the way in which they have been neglected by the classes, especially the neglect of the Harijans by the Hindus. This criminal neglect is unwarranted by any of the scriptures. We are custodians of a great religion and yet we have

[1] The talks reproduced above took place on the 13th. What follows is a report of the talk on the 14th.

[2] *Hind Swaraj*, which, however, was written in 1909 and not in 1908: *Vide* Vol. X.

been guilty of a crime which constitutes our greatest shame. Had I not been a believer in the inscrutable ways of Providence, a sensitive man like me would have been a raving maniac.

J M What affords you the greatest hope and satisfaction?

G. Faith in myself born of faith in God.

J M In moments when your heart may sink within you, you hark back to this faith in God?

G. Yes. That is why I have always described myself as an irrepressible optimist.

J M. So am I. Our difficulties are our salvation. They make us hark back to the living God.

G. Yes. My difficulties have strengthened my faith which rises superior to every difficulty, and remains undimmed. My darkest hour was when I was in Bombay a few months ago.[1] It was the hour of my temptation. Whilst I was asleep I suddenly felt as though I wanted to see a woman. Well a man who had tried to rise superior to the sex instinct for nearly 40 years was bound to be intensely pained when he had this frightful experience. I ultimately conquered the feeling, but I was face to face with the blackest moment of my life and if I had succumbed to it, it would have meant my absolute undoing. I was stirred to the depths because strength and peace come from a life of continence. Many Christian friends are jealous of the peace I possess. It comes from God who has blessed me with the strength to battle against temptation.

J M I agree 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'

The talk now was switched on to subjects vastly different—those of current politics and other subjects But Gandhiji would not allow a discussion on current politics in the columns of *Harijan* I am therefore reluctantly obliged to omit this very important part of the discussion

J M If money is to be given to India, in what ways can it be wisely given without causing any harm? Will money be of any value?

G. No. When money is given it can only do harm. It has got to be earned when it is required. I am convinced that the American and British money which has been voted-for missionary societies has done more harm than good. You cannot serve God and mammon both. And my fear is that mammon has been sent to serve India and God has remained

[1] In January 1936; *vide* Vol LXII, pp. 211-2, also 429.

behind, with the result that He will one day have His vengeance. When the American says, 'I will serve you through money,' I dread him. I simply say to him: 'Send us your engineers not to earn money but to give us the benefit of their scientific knowledge.'

J M But money is stored-up personality. It can be badly used as well as well used Through money you can get the services of a good engineer But far more dangerous than money is human personality It makes possible the good as well as the bad use of money Kagawa of Japan admits the use of money and machinery is attended with peril but insists, and I agree with him, that Christ is able to dominate both the money and the machine

G. I have made the distinction between money given and money earned. If an American says he wants to serve India, and you packed him off here, I should say we had not earned his services. But take Pierre Ceresole who came at his own expense, but after our consent, to serve earthquake-stricken Bihar. We would love to have as many Ceresoles as could possibly come to our help. No. It is my certain conviction based on experience that money plays the least part in matters of spirit.

J M If money is the root of evil, we are living in a time when there is more money than ever was before

G. Which means that there is more evil in the world.

J M This makes it supremely important that we study more profoundly than ever how to dominate this power both among the rich and the poor with spiritual purpose, motive and passion. . . .

The greatest thing you have ever done is the observance of your Monday silence. You illustrate thereby the storing up and releasing of power when needed. What place has it continued to have in the preparation of your spiritual tasks?

G It is not the greatest thing I have done, but it certainly means a great thing to me. I am now taking silence almost every day. If I could impose on myself silence for more days in the week than one I should love it. In Yeravda Jail I once observed a 15 days' silence. I was in the seventh heaven during that period. But this silence is now being utilized to get through arrears of work. It is a superficial advantage after all. The real silence should not be interrupted even by writing notes to others and carrying on conversation through them. The notes interrupt the sacredness of the silence when you should listen to

the music of the spheres. That is why I often say that my silence is a fraud.

Harijan, 19-12-1936 and 26-12-1936

43. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

November 14[1], 1936

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I shall try to procure Ku.'s[2] book as revised by you and read it.

When you post the Granth Saheb, you may pack the precious shawl, if that will satisfy your soul. I understand that Granth Saheb is available in Hindi characters with Hindi translation. If it is a Gurumukhi edition, you will have to send me a Gurumukhi primer with equivalent Hindi alphabet. I wish you could persuade enlightened Sikhs to take to the Devnagari script in the place of the Gurumukhi.

I gave over four hours to Dr. or Mr. Mott with Andrews between yesterday and today.[3]

Love.

ROBBER

From the original: C.W. 3599 Courtesy: Amrit Kaur Also G.N. 6408

44. A LETTER

WARDHA,
November 14, 1936

DEAR FRIEND,

Charlie Andrews has passed on your letter to me. I am moving in the matter. I have no recollection of ever having received any letter from you.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] There is overwriting in the source; 24 seems to have been made 14, the book *Letters to Amrit Kaur* also gives the date 14-11-1936

[2] J. C. Kumarappa

[3] *Vide* the preceding item.

45. *LETTER TO MOTILAL ROY*

November 14, 1936

DEAR MOTI BABU,

Shankerlal Banker sends me a pathetic letter covering a letter from the A.I.S.A. I want you to give him the satisfaction that very ordinary business men give and is expected of them. Surely you and I have to be like Ceasar's wife above suspicion. The khadi you give cannot be priced at more than the present market price and if that does not cover the [final][1] advance you should pay off the balance, if necessary, in easy but reasonable instalments.

With love,

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 11051

46. *LETTER TO S. AMBUJAMMAL*

November 14, 1936

CHI. AMBUJAM,[2]

As usual you have anticipated me. I had fully intended to write to you on my return to Segaon but you were crowded out.

I am glad you are persisting with your translation of Tulsidas. It will do you good and serve the Tamilians.

It would be a great load off the minds of you all if Kichi[3] sticks to the banking job and keeps well. It is good that he is contented with his work.

I do get the fruit regularly. Once a week is enough. If sour limes are cheap, you may add 2 doz. But you must send

[1] In the source, the letters are smudged here.
[2] This is in Hindi.
[3] Krishnaswami, the addressee's son

me the prices for my satisfaction.

Love.

Blessings from
BAPU

Form the original: Ambujammal Papers Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

47. LETTER TO SHIVABHAI G. PATEL

November 14, 1936

CHI. SHIVABHAI,

I got your letter. Your disappointment is not justified. One who strives hard does succeed in the end. Do stick to the decision already taken. Think twice before taking a decision and once it is taken stick to it. Vasumati spoke of those twelve things.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S N. 9517

48. LETTER TO SHRILAL

November 14, 1936

CHI. SHRILAL,

I have gone through your letter carefully. So far the printed pamphlet has not come into my hands; perhaps it is not necessary. I do like your writing. Your views have become organized to some extent . . .[1] find the way out. For the present do not insist on carrying on without a servant. It facilitates things if we treat a servant not as a servant but as a companion and we get the desired help immediately. It takes time and unnecessary expenditure for half-baked, burdened and weak persons like us to find companions. I on my part keep gathering such persons round me and if I do not have them, then I will have no one for my experiments. . . .

Now about the women. I would prefer husbands and wives. I believe that women can make their full contribution. But I feel

[1] A word or two are illegible here.

that if a woman only goes on bearing children, she will not be able to do anything else. My idea of married *brahmacharya* was born out of these kinds of difficulties. If your group believes in the present methods of birth-control, then it is obvious to me that you are on the way to ruin. Moreover, a woman is not as well trained and educated as her husband. Thus a woman is almost . . .[1] and the institution has to suffer.

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

49. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

November 14, 1936

CHI. GANGABEHN,

I got your letter. I am immediately writing to Chowdhari at the address that I have been given.

I have not yet received the book sent by the Parsi sister. You certainly did well in buying a cow. I am glad that you feel happy there.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro–6: G. S. Gangabehnne, p. 145

50. LETTER TO VIYOGI HARI

November 14, 1936

BHAI VIYOGI HARI,

Ghee should be eschewed unless you are sure of its quality. Oil may be used by those who can digest it. But the quantity of milk should certainly be increased to make up for the lack of ghee. With some effort pure ghee ought to be available. In the matter of spices the attitude should be liberal. Students should go only as far as they can. Give them black pepper if it seems necessary, even green chillies if they are habituated to them. But the value of simple pure food should be explained to them and they should go as far as they can in the matter.

[1] A word or two are illegible here.

It would be best for the students to grind the flour themselves; it will be cheaper, too, in the end.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1091

51. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

November 15, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

Send fruit with Ganpat. I take it that it includes apples. The stock of apples is exhausted. I have of course spoken to Kanu for the oranges, as that man Satyanarayan fleeces us. His bill was exorbitant. I have paid it. Do the oranges cost four rupees a hundred and bananas eight annas for fifty? In spite of having been told not to, he has sent the fruit again. I have returned it. This is just for your information.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. S.N 11503

52. AN EXAMPLE FOR HINDU PRINCES AND THEIR ADVISERS

[Before *November 16, 1936*][1]

The Travancore Durbar have earned the congratulations of the whole Hindu world and all thoughtful men by issuing the following proclamation:

> Profoundly convinced of the truth and validity of our religion, believing that it is based on Divine guidance and on all-comprehending toleration, knowing that in its practice it has throughout the centuries adapted itself to the need of the changing times, solicitous that none of our Hindu subjects should, by reason of birth, caste or community, be denied the consolation and solace of the Hindu faith, we have decided and hereby declare, ordain and command that, subject to such rules and conditions as may be laid down and imposed by us for preserving their proper atmosphere and maintaining their rituals and

[1] Though this was first published in *The Bombay Chronicle* on November 17, it is clear from the following item that it was ready for release on the 16th

observances, there should henceforth be no restriction placed on any Hindu by birth or religion on entering or worshipping at temples controlled by us and our Government

The action has been long overdue. But better late than never. It may be said without pride that the way for the great step was prepared by the gentle but persistent efforts of the Travancore branch of the Harijan Sevak Sangh headed by Shri K. Parameswaran Pillai. The workers of the Sangh had awakened the conscience of the *savarna* Hindus who had sent numerous petitions to the Durbar praying for the opening of the State temples to Harijans on the same terms as they were to caste Hindus. Untouchability, though an excrescence, has taken such hold of the Hindu world that whenever a Hindu breaks through it and declares against it, he excites admiration among reformers and becomes the object of fierce criticism from the orthodox. This is much more so when the action is taken by one in high authority as H. H. the Maharaja of Travancore, an ancient orthodox Hindu State. Let us hope all criticism will be hushed before this well thought out, deliberate act of piety and justice.

Let us hope, too, that no attempt will be made to whittle away the hard-earned freedom of Harijans by hedging it round by any the least distinction between one Hindu and another. If the proclamation means anything it means that in the temples conducted under the State aegis Harijans will offer worship precisely on the same terms as the highest caste Hindus so called. In other words, in the house of God in Travancore henceforth there will be no distinction between man and man, there will be no Harijans and no high caste, all will be Harijans —children of God. If these are not the implications of the great proclamation, it is nothing but a mere scrap of paper. But we have no reason to doubt its sincerity or suspect any mental reservations.

Travancore has a large and important Christian community. Christian missions are flirting with Harijans, rightly no doubt from their own standpoint, they are spending money on them and holding out hope of real freedom and equality of social status. It is beside the present discussion that for Harijans there is no social equality, no real freedom anywhere except when it is first obtained in Hinduism. I am not thinking of individuals. I am thinking of the whole mass. The latter are so intertwined with the other Hindus that unless they become brothers with them instead of remaining serfs which they are, no change of

label can avail anything. But this apart, let us realize that the working of the proclamation will be narrowly watched and criticized by the sister communities. It therefore behoves the State authorities as well as the caste Hindus to give full effect to the letter and the spirit of the proclamation.

The main duty of working the proclamation, however, devolves in a way upon the reformers and Harijans. They should avail themselves of the freedom in a religious, becoming and humble spirit. Reformers should see to it that Harijans enter these temples after proper ablutions and in a clean condition. I know that this primary rule is observed more in the breach than in the performance by the vast majority of temple-going caste Hindus. Harijans may not copy the bad manners of caste Hindus. They should take pride in setting a good example in cleanliness both of body and heart.

The proclamation should have no political significance, as it has none. I regard it as the performance of a purely religious duty by the State. And it should be so taken and so treated by all the Hindus of the State. To give it any other colour will be to destroy its great spiritual purpose and effect.

Let us hope that the example of Travancore will prove infectious and all the other Hindu States will follow suit. There is no reason why they should not. It is the privilege and duty of a Hindu prince to propound religious codes which are not inconsistent with the fundamental principles of Hinduism as derived from the Vedas and which are demanded by the spirit of the times. This must be true of all the progressive and living religions. This rule accounts for apparent inconsistencies of the different *smritis* and also obvious departures from the original tenets as even a careless student will detect even in the same *smriti*. If the Hindu princes do not perform this primary function, it is not so much their fault as of the lost Brahminhood. If the Brahminical spirit was restored, princes would be *rishis*, who would take from the revenues the honest minimum necessary to support them as a commission for their labours on behalf of the ryots, and hold their revenue in trust for the ryots. They would not have private property as they possess today and feel independent of their ryots and their wishes.

But whether we reach the ideal state outlined here during the present generation or ever, surely there is nothing to prevent the Hindu princes from following the example set by Travancore, and thus hastening the day of the total removal of untouchability from Hinduism, and helping to save it from

certain destruction. I would advise the responsible Hindus in every Hindu State to approach their princes and their advisers to initiate the overdue reform.

Harijan, 21-11-1936

53 TELEGRAM TO G. D. BIRLA

WARDHAGANJ,
November 16, 1936

GHANSHYAMDAS BIRLA
CARE LUCKY
CALCUTTA

NO NECESSITY ALL-INDIA DAY. YOU SHOULD CONGRATULATE DURBAR IN YOUR OFFICIAL CAPACITY. AM RELEASING FOR PUBLICATION MY ARTICLE[1] FOR "HARIJAN" APPEALING PRINCES FOLLOW TRAVANCORE.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 7981. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

54. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 16, 1936

CHI. NARANDAS,

I am enclosing Prema's letter. Keshu has sent me your letter to him. Do you believe that Lakshmidas is unjust to him? Can Keshu acquire a patent in his individual capacity? Isn't what Lakshmidas writes of Arjun correct? Is Lakshmidas jealous of you or Keshu? Is he partial? Which are the special points about Keshu's machine? Has he stolen any points from the machine which Lakshmidas has made? I have come to believe that Keshu is prejudiced against Lakshmidas.

Please throw whatever light you can on the matter.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8511. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

55. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

November 16, 1936

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have your letter. Consider this as a footnote to Lilavati's letter. Kanaiyo is happy here. He has taken upon himself a big job. If he sticks to it his life will certainly be rewarded. Jamna[1] should not pester him for coming there.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8512. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

56. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

November 16, 1936

CHI. PRABHA,

I have no time at all. I have received your letter. You must obtain permission to come here for improving your health. If you can, give the accompanying to Jayaprakash. Ba and Lilavati have arrived. Kanu has come from Bombay. Manu is in Delhi. She has not yet come. Vasumati has left today.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3486

[1] Addressee's wife

57. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

November 16, 1936

I should be glad to have your letter under any pretext. The truth is that I have no right to give any opinion. I do not meet anyone and do not read newspapers much. However, I say whatever strikes me whenever I am asked about something . . .[1] insist on no one at all. In suggesting Jawaharlal's name, too, I had in mind only the country's good. Let us see what happens. I hope the children are well.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 162

58. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI

WARDHA,
November [17][2], 1936

BHAI MUNSHI,

I have got your Diwali card. But for whom is it Diwali? You have a Holi burning there. Who can remain untouched by its sparks?

How is Jijima? Her illness has been prolonged. It is better that we get along with the appointment of the Constitution Committee. It would serve us well if the work begins.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 7610. Courtesy: K. M. Munshi

[1] Omission as in the source

[2] The source has 27th which appears to be a slip, for Jijima had died before that date; *vide* p. 58 Also, Diwali was on November 14.

59. *LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI*

SEGAON,
November 17, 1936

CHI. AMRITLAL,

I got your letter after Vasumati had left. So the address for the information of the relatives could not be given. I am sending Kanu your address.

Among other fruits are pomegranate, custard-apple, pineapple, *jambu*, sweet guavas, mangoes, fully ripe *rayan*, sweet berries, etc. There is no harm in taking bananas occasionally. But it is better to take them in place of *rotli*. You may wash them and add butter or ghee. It is possible that some of these fruits may not suit you as the apples did not. You should give up such fruits.

I follow the point about soap. Chhotelal says that even soap powder is more expensive than the soap made at Maganwadi. Can you say anything on this matter? You are gaining weight satisfactorily. It should go on. See that you do not have the slightest indigestion. Mirabehn is also recouping her health and she does not feel tired while walking. She does some work also. Although sometimes she does transgress the limit. One day she even had fever. I was scared and so was she. She took almost nothing on that day and remained on honey, water and lemon juice and was well again. Amtul Salaam lives at Santa Cruz. Do go there. The address is Easter Villa, 7th Road.

See Kanti if you can. Your recipe for making gruel is correct. No lumps will form even if you put paste of flour made in cold water into the boiling water. I had made gruel for 75 prisoners at a time by this method. It cooks in a very short time. It takes quite a long time if we put the cold mixture on the fire and it requires stirring continuously. Do you understand what I write? I hope you do. You must pour into boiling water the thick paste of flour, stirring the while. The intake of milk should be up to 120 *tolas*. Make a habit of taking lemons.

There is nothing about Harilal in the newspapers. I do wish to know, however, what he said on the occasion, write

it was and what happened there, and so on.[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10724

60. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 17/19, 1936

CHI. KANTI,

I would of course be glad if you insist on writing to me only a postcard every week. I do not wish to disturb you at all in your studies.

I wrote the above the day before yesterday and then there was an interruption. Nor do I wish to waste even a moment of your time. However, I do not regard five minutes given to me every week an unnecessary waste of time. I very often think of writing to you but fail to find the time. Amtul Salaam writes much about you and sends messages but I write nothing of it to you.

I write this on purpose. Sardar told me that you had been to Harilal and there you saw such a tragic sight that you could not control your tears and wept and came away. How will you help me by keeping unhappiness from me? I must learn to endure unhappiness and get used to it. Write to me, therefore, all that happened there. Also tell me what that Arya Samaj business was. Is there any truth in it? Does anyone look after him? I put these questions to you because you still take interest in Harilal. How are things with you?

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 7308. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

[1] The reference is to Harilal's reconversion to Hinduism through *shuddhi* performed according to Arya Samaj rites.

61. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

November 19, 1936

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I write never to make you weep but always to make you laugh. After your letter I realized the meaning you gave to your previous letter. At the same time your paragraph did bear the meaning I put upon it But why should my play make you weep? Why don't you weep over the many choice adjectives I apply to you? You must develop a thick skin, if you will be well, both physically and mentally, and will take up the task for which you seem to be cut out.

I am not going to Faizpur on 1st December but I may on 10th or 11th, certainly about 20th. If you come after 27th it will be very late. Why not come earlier and go from there to Ahmedabad. Then you may be a little late, if you like. But you will see what is possible. I am not touring after the Congress. My destination is Segaon. I shall have to go to Belgaum in March or April, whenever Gandhi Seva Sangh meets. This gives you all the information you need and ask for. The session begins on 27th and ends 29th.

I shall certainly read your article if it comes to me in time for suggestions.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3754. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6910

62. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

November 19, 1936

CHI. PREMA,

There was nothing in your previous letter which called for a reply. I would welcome any pretext for writing to you. But I had no time at all. I must, however, reply to your last letter. Kaka had told me about your illness in the course of a minute's conversation, but I did not know that it was as serious as you describe it to be. How did you manage to fall ill like that? I

see your carelessness in this. If you looked upon your body as a trust from God and used it accordingly, you would not fall ill as you did. Why don't you content yourself with what you can do within the limits of your strength?

I have no plan of camping there from December 1 or of starting on a tour in January. Yes, I should certainly like to go to Faizpur before the Exhibition starts.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Lilavati has returned to Segaon. She is unpredictable. Her aspirations are no doubt high. She works hard, too. But she will make no real progress until she overcomes her impatience. Still, if I do not give up hope of swaraj why should I give up hope of Lilavati? It will be difficult for you to find another optimist like me.

Has not Harilal fallen into a deep pit? But I have not given up hope even about him. What more can I say? Becoming an Arya Samajist means nothing.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10386. Also C.W. 6825. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

63. *LETTER TO DAHYABHAI M. PATEL*

November 19, 1936

BHAI DAHYABHAI,

I have your letter. The picture of you sitting in front of me is still vivid before my eyes. How helpless I am! I was so hard pressed for time that I did not even dare to ask you how you were. I wanted to save every moment of my time and every particle of my energy.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI DAHYABHAI MANORDAS
DHOLKA DHANDHUKA RAILWAY

From Gujarati: C.W. 2709. Courtesy: Dahyabhai M. Patel

64. LETTER TO RAOJIBHAI N. PATEL

November 19, 1936

CHI. RAOJIBHAI,

I have your letter. I wish your Conference success. The yardstick of success is not resolutions however grand but firm follow-up action on the part of the youth. They should not pass any resolution which they are not prepared to implement.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI RAOJIBHAI NATHABHAI PATEL
PATIDAR YUVAK MANDAL
SEVA MANDIR
NADIAD, B.B. & C.I. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9009

65. LETTER TO RAMNARAYAN N. PATHAK

November 19, 1936

BHAI RAMNARAYAN,

Your first statement is not an indication of truth. It fails to incorporate many points that should have been there. Even my opinion has not been quoted correctly. How can a person ignorant of the background understand it? I have to join issue with you, should I not, when you do not accept my opinion and at the same time publish it? If you wish, you may publish your second statement. However, you need not do anything under pressure from me. Write and do only what your mind and your heart permit. I expect nothing more than that you will weigh calmly the words of one like me.

It is not up to me to forsake or ignore you. To the end of my life I shall hope, as I do in the case of Harilal, that you will be reformed.

To me Narmada's staying in Jyoti Sangh, her being considered a pious woman, your staying near her and other things are like branding one who has already burnt himself. I do not know

what kind of morality you accept. Probably you do not find any immorality in your conduct and therefore my simile would hurt you as everything I say hurts Harilal. However, there is no other way before me to awaken either him or you. I do not know you but I do know Narmada a little. She is a foolish girl and has very little understanding. She is ignorant of truth and untruth. Any young man can mislead her. You became her husband instead of being a brother or father to her and did obvious injustice to Ganga. Narmada could not even stand the talk she had with me before leaving. I keep on receiving laments from your brother, Ganga and Hemubhai. It is terrible if all that they write is true. And if it is—and from what you yourself write it seems to be—one shouldn't be surprised if you were playing false with them. I know young men who feel satisfied that they have done their duty when they partially acknowledge their sins and if other people are not satisfied with it they get angry. They think that society is ungrateful to them. I wish you would not make such a mistake. Believe it that whatever I have written is for your good and for your guidance. You may forsake me but I do not forsake myself. So how can I do that with you or anyone else? आत्मवत्सर्वभूतेषु[1] is not only a scriptural statement; it has been woven into my life.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W 2786. Courtesy: Ramnarayan N. Pathak

66. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

Unrevised

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 20, 1936

CHI. MARY,

I have been terribly behindhand in my correspondence. No time unless I would work outside the permitted hours. But I won't. How long that 'won't' will last remains to be seen.

I hardly think Maria's[2] case will apply to you. But no one knows what may happen.

About return passage I shall try. I do not want you to collect in London for the A.I.V.I.A. I suppose you have

[1] Seeing others as oneself
[2] Anne Marie Petersen

Indians in mind. It is no use your going to them with the beggar's bowl even for *Daridranarayana.*

You may certainly use the Rs. 100 and any other such sum in the way you indicate.

I do not think you need to thank donors who give through agencies like me.

I do not at all like the idea of your earning anything by giving *takli* lessons unless they are given to some rich people who want to learn *takli* spinning as a hobby. I would far rather supply your small wants from other sources.

My policy of not asking or expecting friends of the West to join any C. D. movement still abides. They can do much by doing what I call constructive work on behalf of A.I.S.A., A.I.V.I.A. and the like.

Now I think I have answered all your questions.

Love to you and Motibehn whom I was delighted to see, even though it was only for a very short time.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 6069. Also C.W. 3399. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

67. *LETTER TO JOHN R. MOTT*

November 20, 1936

DEAR FRIEND,

I was delighted to have your letter. It was a pleasure to me to renew our acquaintance and to have the discussion. Pray thank Mrs. Mott for the two packets of maple sugar.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

DR. JOHN R. MOTT
NAGPUR

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

68. LETTER TO MANU GANDHI

November 20, 1936

CHI. MANUDI,

I had your letter. Now you are expected here any day. Come and start singing *bhajans* for us immediately. There are certainly numerous things to learn here if one wants to. Kishorelal and Gomati are touring in Gujarat these days.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 1561. Courtesy: Manubehn S. Mashruwala

69. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI

November 20, 1936

BHAI MUNSHI,

This is not a letter of condolence. Jijima has been rewarded, having served and been served by both of you. No one born is immortal. I always admired her love for you and your devotion to her. Her devotion to God will always be a protecting hedge around you.

You may come on Saturday or Sunday week. We shall decide and then you can get the resolution passed accordingly. It is unnecessary to bring everyone here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 7609. Courtesy: K. M. Munshi

70. LETTER TO RAMESHWARI NEHRU

November 20, 1936

DEAR SISTER,

I had your telegram. The Travancore affair for us is a call to greater purity, greater sacrifice and greater dedication. I have an unshakable faith that if we continue to be truly devoted in the performance of our duty, untouchability will go root and branch.

Your work must be progressing satisfactorily.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi. G.N. 7984. Also C.W. 3077 Courtesy: Rameshwari Nehru

71. SEX EDUCATION[1]

Sjt. Maganbhai Desai, who received the other day the degree equivalent to Master of Arts from the Gujarat Vidyapith, wrote to me a Gujarati letter dated 7th October from which I cull the following:[2]

> May I invite you to discuss in the columns of *Harijanbandhu* a question which you have so far left more or less untouched, I mean the question of imparting sex instruction to young people?
>
> Should sex education be included in the educational curricula of our children? Who should impart it? What would be the necessary qualification for the task? Should this subject be taught in a matter-of-fact manner to all and sundry just like geography or arithmetic? Or is there any limit? And if so, who is to draw the line and where? Again, should the aim of sex education be to combat the onset of libido or simply to recognize it as an inevitable fact of nature which has to be accepted and submitted to?
>
> May I also take leave to make a special request in this connection? Apart from what you may write on this subject in English, won't

[1] Translated from Gujarati by Pyarelal. The original appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 22-11-1936

[2] Only extracts have been reproduced here.

you write something for the Gujarati reader in Gujarati? You know it is an old-standing grievance of ours that you have ceased to give your original contributions in Gujarati.

I kept this letter for such a long time hoping that one day I should write something on the subject discussed in it. Meanwhile I had to go to Ahmedabad to preside at the Twelfth Gujarati Sahitya Parishad.[1] During my stay of four days at the Vidyapith and in course of contact with Gujarati men and women there,. past incidents came afresh to me. I was confronted by the man who had gently castigated me in the above mentioned letter. He even asked me, "What about that letter?" I pacified him by saying that I was carrying it everywhere with me and that I would definitely write about it. At that time I wanted to write in English. On reaching Segaon, I felt the impact of Maganbhai's castigation. I was reminded of the bitter but affectionate quarrel with Swami Anand in the days of *Navajivan*. He could not bear that I should contribute my original ideas to *Young India* while only stale versions should go to *Navajivan*. I also felt the same. Yet my insistence on writing in *Young India* was not out of place. I think at long last Swami Anand got tired and stopped troubling me. Even after the lapse of such a long time I cannot say definitely which of us two was right. Be it as it may, having said this much by way of introduction I wish to tell the readers of *Harijanbandhu* that I fully agree with Shri Maganbhai's complaint. And from now onwards, every week I will try to give something new to the Gujarati readers. I appeal to them to encourage me in my effort.[2]

Preoccupation with sex is daily becoming more marked in Gujarat as in the rest of India. And what is more, those who fall under its sway feel as if there is something meritorious about it. When a slave begins to take pride in his fetters and hugs them like precious ornaments, the triumph of the slave-owner is complete. But this success of Cupid, spectacular though it may be, will, I am convinced, prove to be short-lived and ignoble, and at long last end in inanition even like a scorpion whose venom is spent. But that does not mean that we can in the meantime afford to sit with folded hands. The certainty of its defeat need not, must not, lull us into a false sense of security. The conquest of lust is the highest endeavour of a man's or a woman's

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXIII, pp. 407-17 and 418-21.
[2] This paragraph has been taken from *Harijanbandhu*.

existence. Without overcoming lust man cannot hope to rule over self. And without rule over self there can be no swaraj or *Ramarajya*. Rule of all without rule of oneself would prove to be as deceptive and disappointing as a painted toy mango, charming to look at outwardly but hollow and empty within. No worker who has not overcome lust can hope to render any genuine service to the cause of Harijans, communal unity, khadi, cow-protection or village reconstruction. Great causes like these cannot be served by intellectual equipment alone, they call for spiritual effort or soul-force. Soul-force comes only through God's grace, and God's grace never descends upon a man who is a slave to lust.

What place has then instruction in sexual science in our educational system, or has it any place there at all? Sexual science is of two kinds, that which is used for controlling or overcoming the sexual passion and that which is used to stimulate and feed it. Instruction in the former is as necessary a part of a child's education as the latter is harmful and dangerous and fit therefore only to be shunned. All great religions have rightly regarded *kama* as the arch-enemy of man, anger or hatred coming only in the second place. According to the *Gita*, the latter is an offspring of the former. The *Gita* of course uses the word *kama* in its wider sense of desire. But the same holds good of the narrow sense in which it is used here.

This, however, still leaves unanswered the question, viz., whether it is desirable to impart to young pupils a knowledge about the use and function of generative organs. It seems to me that it is necessary to impart such knowledge to a certain extent. At present they are often left to pick up such knowledge anyhow, with the result that they are misled into abusive practices. We cannot properly control or conquer the sexual passion by turning a blind eye to it. I am therefore strongly in favour of teaching young boys and girls the significance and right use of their generative organs And in my own way I have tried to impart this knowledge to young children of both sexes for whose training I was responsible.

But the sex education that I stand for must have for its object the conquest and sublimation of the sex passion. Such education should automatically serve to bring home to children the essential distinction between man and brute, to make them realize that it is man's special privilege and pride to be gifted with the faculties of head and heart both; that he is a thinking, no less than a feeling, animal, as the very derivation of the word

manushya shows, and to renounce the sovereignty of reason over the blind instincts is therefore to renounce a man's estate. In man reason quickens and guides the feeling, in brute the soul lies ever dormant. To awaken the heart is to awaken the dormant soul, to awaken reason, and to inculcate discrimination between good and evil.

Who should teach this true science of sex? Clearly, he who has attained mastery over his passions. To teach astronomy and kindred sciences we have teachers who have gone through a course of training in them and are masters of their art. Even so must we have as teachers of sexual science, i.e., the science of sex control, those who have studied it and have acquired mastery over self. Even a lofty utterance that has not the backing of sincerity and experience will be inert and lifeless, and will utterly fail to penetrate and quicken the hearts of men, while the speech that springs from self-realization and genuine experience is always fruitful.

Today our entire environment—our reading, our thinking, our social behaviour—is generally calculated to subserve and cater for the sex urge. To break through its coils is no easy task. But it is a task worthy of our highest endeavour. Even if there are a handful of teachers endowed with practical experience, who accept the ideal of attaining self-control as the highest duty of man, are fired by a genuine and undying faith in their mission, and are sleeplessly vigilant and active, their labour will light the path of the children of Gujarat, save the unwary from falling into the mire of sexuality and rescue those who might be already engulfed in it.

Harijan, 21-11-1936, and *Harijanbandhu*, 22-11-1936

72. HELP CYCLONE-STRICKEN HARIJANS

Sjt. G. Sitarama Sastri writes to Sjt. Thakkar Bapa the following letter:[1]

> The havoc caused by the terrible cyclone that burst over the coastal districts of Andhradesa, especially Guntur District, cannot be adequately measured in terms of money. The official estimate is one crore of rupees. . . . I am writing this to you specially on behalf of Harijans who have been terribly hard hit. Their plight is very pitiable and

[1] Only extracts have been reproduced here.

calls for prompt and adequate relief Over 3,000 weavers have lost homes and looms. Fishermen on the coast, aboriginal tribes, Harijans and other Depressed Classes have lost their all—food, clothing and shelter.

A sum of Rs 25,000 is the bare minimum required to give them immediate relief. . . Donations may be sent to Deshbhakta Konda Venkatapayya, Guntur.

I gladly publish this letter. Calamities such as the one that has overtaken Guntur have become part of our life. There is no doubt that philanthropists will be helping cyclone-stricken people in Guntur, but the call of the Harijans affected by the cyclone required special emphasis, and I hope that those who are interested in Harijans will not fail to respond to this call.

Harijan, 21-11-1936

73. BEWARE OF BEGGARS

I have just understood that Sjt. Govind Chandra Misra, who was at one time in the Sabarmati Ashram and who has been carrying on Harijan work near Cuttack, has come down to Bombay to make the usual collections. As a rule he consults me before going out for collections. He has not done so this time; and he knows too that there are grave allegations against him into which I am investigating. I would therefore warn all those who have been helping him under the belief that he goes out collecting with my permission, that they should refrain from giving him any assistance whatsoever.[1]

Harijan, 21-11-1936

74. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 21, 1936

MY DEAR C. R.,

Read S.'s[2] letter within and give me your decision. Needless to tell you that Sardar is desperately anxious for you to wear the thorny crown. I shall be pleased if you will but I have

[1] Govind Chandra Misra writing to Gandhiji later described the statement as "untrue". For Gandhiji's reply to it, *vide* "A Painful Duty", 19-12-1936.
[2] Satyamurti's

no heart to press it on you. If you have directly or indirectly let S. to think that you could be persuaded into shouldering the burden, you should unhesitatingly say yes and end the agony of those like the Sardar who are anxious that you should come forward.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat G.N. 2059

75. LETTER TO JETHALAL G. SAMPAT

November 21, 1936

CHI. JETHALAL,

I have received your letter. I have started work about the leather affair. The inquiry has been started from a higher level. I will let you know if I get more information Keep writing to me about whatever new developments take place there.

You must come for the exhibition. You will give but you will also take. It will give us a pretext for meeting. However, I shall be happy if you meet your own expenses. If you bring goods up to that amount you will be able to sell them. If that is not possible, I shall manage to get the expenses from somewhere—up to Rs. 25, isn't it? Most probably there won't be any need to bring the workers from there. I will let you know if there is. Come when you are free. You must come over to see me at least ten days before the opening of the exhibition. It will be nice if you spend a few days with me. It will be good if you come over in the first week of December.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9858. Courtesy: Narayan J. Sampat

76. LETTER TO FULCHAND K. SHAH

November 21, 1936

BHAI FULCHAND,

I have your letter. As for you, I have nothing to say. I am like one who, having been scalded by milk, blows on buttermilk before he drinks it. Ramnarayan's action has made me

very unhappy.[1] There have no doubt been such incidents but this was the limit. The question is how our minds react to such incidents.

It is possible that my views are unsuited to the new mind. If it be so, I alone will stick to my views. You must improve your health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati. C.W. 2863 Courtesy: Shardabehn Shah

77. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 21, 1936

BHAI BAPA,

Why should Mahadev keep back your letter from me? There is nothing in it but your overflowing love for the Harijans. Isn't that so? I too love them equally but there is a difference between the two of us. You overdo it while mine is restrained. It is difficult to say which is better. For the time being it is enough for me to say that I have given due thought to what I have done and therefore we are not going to lose anything. Do we ever prevent those who wish to say something or do more work? A true celebration consists only in increasing our purity and other virtues. The simile of the cow at that time[2] was quite appropriate. It was not an insult to the Harijans. Harijans and children like Pulaya and Kanu should not fall into the hands of the missionaries. Anyway, you should keep sending me your views.

Vandemataram from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1167

[1] *Vide* pp. 55-6.
[2] During the discussion with John Mott; *vide* pp. 33-41.

78. LETTER TO BABUJI GAURISHANKER VYAS

November 21, 1936

CHI. BABUJI,

You have done well in writing to me in detail. All that you write is painful. You must work hard. I know Shastri quite well. You should not depend at all on your father-in-law's help. Your duty is clear. You should either engage yourself in some honest work to earn money or plunge into the field of service with a determined will. If you do the latter you have to give up all hope of earning money. You should be interested in service for the sake of service. If it is not so it is hypocrisy, and what can be worse than that? A father-in-law has been given the same status as a father in our religion. Consult Shastriji, therefore, and do as he suggests. Now that you have started writing to me, keep it up. What you have written is true—you are like a son to me.

SHRI BABUJI GAURISHANKER VYAS
HATKESHWAR CHOWK
RAJKOT CITY
KATHIAWAD

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2510

79. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 22, 1936

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

Two of your letters are lying with me unanswered. To me Diwali and Holi are the same. When there is a fire raging before our eyes, it is a sin to celebrate Diwali. You indeed deserve congratulations for settling the brothers' quarrel. I believe that that is enough for the success of your Bombay trip. It was good that there you could consult the doctors also. What is wrong in serving your mother? Now you will be able to

serve her with knowledge. Service to your mother can be a part of the larger service to the country.

Do go to Trivandrum if you can improve your health there. You might get well if the climate there suits you. However, go only if Ramachandran permits you. As far as I am concerned I prefer Indore. But do whatever you think is best. Hope Bari is improving.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G N. 362

80. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI A. MEHTA

November 22, 1936

BHAI BHAGWANJI,

I have received your complaints. What can I do if you do not understand humour. I do not regret at all what I have done. You will have nothing to complain of if instead of considering me a mahatma you consider me a biped without horns or tail—a human being with a black head. A correction is perhaps required. Now my head is grey, not black. But that is an argument that can be put forward from my side. Isn't it? If I feel hurt by your letter you will apologize, won't you?

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

SHRI BHAGWANJI ANUPCHAND VAKIL
RAJKOT C.S.
KATHIAWAD

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G N. 5830 Also C.W. 3053 Courtesy Bhagwanji A. Mehta

81. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

November 23, 1936

MY DEAR C. R.,

Don't be angry. I have taken a liberty with your note on the Travancore Act—a liberty I do not remember having ever taken with your writings. The reasons for the amendments and the addition you will easily understand and I would fain hope

as easily accept as valid. Anyway, I have felt the duty of making the corrections for the sake of the cause.

Love.

BAPU

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

82. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 23, 1936

CHI. AMRITLAL,

I got your two letters. You seem to be a pretty good reporter of news. Your progress may be regarded fair. No one can put on 5 lb. in a week. I shall be satisfied if henceforth you put on 2 lb. every week.

Mirabehn's diet at present is just the same as you have written. Apples cure many persons of their constipation. However every constitution has its own characteristics. Formerly Mirabehn had no such thing as constipation. I am the main cause of her illness, am I not? Anyway, things are getting on well now at any rate.

Gur made from the date juice has been a complete success now. The cause of the earlier failure seems to be the carelessness in applying lime to the earthen pot.

There is a scarcity of ghee here at present. The number of bachelors has increased. Now Balkrishna has joined them. I shall definitely arrange to send ghee to you.

My method of making the gruel definitely saves time and there is no difficulty in cooking. Some items need boiling water and some others should be put in cold water when being placed on the fire, for instance, potatoes.

No one gave me the information which you have been able to give regarding Harilal. But now I have received more information. His condition is miserable. There is no change in him at all He only needs money for liquor.

I understand about Kana. Train him when you come here. None of your letters are pending now. Lilavati has taken over the charge of the kitchen and the accounts.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10725

83. LETTER TO JETHALAL G. SAMPAT

November 23, 1936

CHI. JETHALAL,

My own feeling is that I have received all your letters and my recollection is that I have answered them all. Now you will be coming here soon, so perhaps there won't be any need for a letter. If there is, let me know.

I am carrying on brisk correspondence about the leather. You must see the correspondence even if nothing comes of it. I shall get the news about the appeal by telegram tomorrow.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I have collected some village instruments which you will see. They are no more to be found in the villages but of this later.

From the Gujarati: C.W. 9859 Courtesy: Narayan J. Sampat

84. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 24, 1936

MY DEAR REBEL,

I am quite clear that women should not seek favours from men. Therefore the fittest should rely upon their being wanted for the parliamentary work. I like the idea of some women at least declining to be on the reserved list. Those who will come on the Congress ticket must sign the Congress pledge. I do not know what is possible at this stage. Dr. M. should have no difficulty if she would sign the pledge and if there is room for her. But I know nothing of what is happening. You have done well in writing to J. N. I think this covers all your questions on this head. If not you will ask again.

Faizpur is 25 miles' motor drive from Bhusaval and 7 from a station before B. I forget the name. If you can start from J.[1]

[1] Jullundur

two days earlier, you can easily drop in at Faizpur. You can even stay there two or three days if you can afford to leave J. earlier still. I should not accept any fixtures in J. after 12th December. You will watch my programme about that time and act accordingly. I did ask Mrs. S. to withdraw but I do not remember whether she acted up to my advice. Dr. M should know

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3755. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6911

85. LETTER TO MADHAVDAS G. KAPADIA

November 24, 1936

CHI. MADHAVDAS[1],

I quite forgot your [letter]. Jamnalalji will no doubt contribute whatever he can afford. If he asks for a note there is no harm in giving it. However, tell him to consult me about the matter. I had indeed opened an account for you but at the same time had instructed them not to harass you.

As for Diwali, I am not even aware of it. The sentiment behind it has died out. When there is a fire raging all around, how can there be a Diwali celebration? As long as Harilal has not freed himself of his addiction, his conversion and reconversion can have no value.

Blessings to you both from both of us.

BAPU

[PS.]

You should always write your address in a letter.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati. M.M.U./XXII

86. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

November 24, 1936

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

Nobody here shares your view. Personally I liked Jawaharlal's statement. How could he have said less? What more could we expect? This time there is no question of remaining in the

[1] Brother of Kasturba Gandhi

Cabinet. We shall see about that at the proper time. I didn't wish to send any draft, but who am I to say no to Mathuradas? After all he is my nephew and has been able to coax me into agreeing with a number of things. If you don't approve of the draft write out another, and if you think it your duty to contest the election do so. If you think it necessary to make any changes, by all means do so. Whatever you do, do with confidence, for we have to cross many more deserts yet.

Improve your health.

If you can, come to Wardha on your way back from the Frontier Province.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 197-8

87. DISCUSSION WITH BASIL MATHEWS AND OTHERS[1]

[*November 24, 1936*][2]

I cannot speak with either the definiteness or the confidence of a Stalin or a Hitler, as I have no cut-and-dried programme which I can impose on the villagers. My method, I need not say, is different. I propose to convert by patient persuasion. This is a kind of practical adult education to be put to use as it progresses. The centre is automatically shifted from the cities to the villages. They will be taught to know what they should want and how to obtain it in the shape of sanitation and hygiene, improvement of material conditions and social relations. If this primary education is taken by them in its fullness everything else follows. But in indicating the ideal I have told you of the difficulties of this stupendous task. For you should know that we have smaller, more illiterate villages even than Segaon, where people hug their ignorance and dirt as they do their untouchability.

With this he gave Mr Mathews a vivid idea of the village and its inhabitants and surroundings, and spoke on the problem of utilization of waste hours and waste products or of products that were going to waste. He described how a successful experiment was now being made of tapping palm-trees for *gur* which were either being used for toddy or not used at all. And he gave Mr. Mathews and Mr. Hodge and others present

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

[2] The date is from the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary.

a sample of the *gur* made that morning A palm-tapper had to be engaged, he dictated his own terms. Gandhiji said:

I want them to dictate their own terms. He charges Rs. 10 a month for tapping 25 trees, but when more people begin doing the thing and have learnt how to utilize their idle hours, the adjustment will take place of itself.

He next talked of sanitation. . . . He said:

Lionel Curtis[1] when he wrote that the Indian village consisted of dilapidated structures built on dung-heaps did not overdraw the picture. We have to remove the dung-heaps, turn them to good account and make the village site a smiling garden.

Mr. Basil Mathews . . . discussed the place of the money-lender and the zamindar in the village economy. Gandhiji said:

The money-lender who is inevitable today will gradually eliminate himself. Nor are co-operative banks needed, because when I have taught Harijans the arts I want to teach them they will not need much ready money. Besides, those who are today deep down in mire cannot make use of co-operative banks. I am not so much concerned in getting them loans of money or plots of land as I am about getting them bread and butter and even a little cheese. When people have learnt the art of turning idle hours to wealth all the adjustment we need will follow.

But what about the zamindar? Would you eliminate him? Would you destroy him?

I do not want to destroy the zamindar, but neither do I feel that the zamindar is inevitable. I will illustrate how I work out my trusteeship theory here. In this village Jamnalalji has a 75 per cent share. Of course I have come here not by design but by accident. When I approached Jamnalalji for help he built me the required hut and outhouses and said, "Whatever profit there is from Segaon you may take for the welfare of the village." If I can persuade other zamindars to do likewise, village improvement becomes easy. Of course the next question is that of the land system and that of Government exploitation. I regard the difficulties surrounding that aspect of the question as for the moment necessary evils. If the present programme is carried through, I shall perhaps know how to deal with the Government exploitation.

[1] *Vide* Vol. VIII, p 9.

Your actual economic policy would differ from Mr. Nehru's? He, so far as I understand him, would wipe out the zamindar.

Yes, we seem to differ in our ideas of village uplift and reconstruction. The difference is of emphasis. He does not mind the village uplift movement. He believes in industrialization; I have grave doubts about its usefulness for India. He believes in the ultimate inevitability of class conflict, though he would avoid it if he could. I expect to convert the zamindars and other capitalists by the non-violent method, and therefore there is for me nothing like an inevitability of class conflict. For it is an essential part of non-violence to go along the line of least resistance. The moment the cultivators of the soil realize their power, the zamindari evil will be sterilized. What can the poor zamindar do when they say that they will simply not work the land unless they are paid enough to feed and clothe and educate themselves and their children in a decent manner? In reality the toiler is the owner of what he produces. If the toilers intelligently combine, they will become an irresistible power. That is how I do not see the necessity of class conflict. If I thought it inevitable I should not hesitate to preach it and teach it.

Mr. Mathews referred to the Archbishop of Canterbury's speech at the Central Hall, Westminster. Gandhiji said:

That is a question to which I have given great thought and I am convinced that if Christian missions will sincerely play the game, no matter what may be their policy under normal circumstances, they must withdraw from the indecent competition to convert the Harijans. Whatever the Archbishop of Canterbury and others may say, what is done here in India in the name of Christianity is wholly different from what they say. There are others in the field also, but as a devotee of truth I say that if there is any difference between their methods, it is one of degree and not of kind. I know of representatives of different religions standing on the same platform and vying with one another to catch the Harijan ear. To dignify this movement with the name of spiritual hunger is a travesty of truth. Arguing on the highest plane I said to Dr. Mott, if they wanted to convert Harijans had they not better begin to convert me? I am a trifle more intelligent than they, and therefore more receptive to the influences of reason that could be brought to bear upon me. But to approach the Pulayas and Pariahs with their palsied hands and paralysed intelligence is no Christianity. No, whilst our reform movement is going on, all religious minded

people should say: Rather than obstruct their work let us support them in their work.

M. Do not the roots of the reform movement go back to the missionary movement? Did not the missionaries wake up the reformers and make a certain amount of stir among the untouchables?

G. I do not think that the missionary movement was responsible for a stirring of the right kind. I agree that it stung the reformers to the quick and awakened them to their sense of duty. They say: 'Here is some good work being done by these missionaries; they open schools and hospitals, train nurses. Why don't we do these things for our own people?' And they try to do something in indifferent imitation.

M. You have spoken of some good work being done by missionaries. Should not we go on with it?

G. Oh yes. Do, by all means. But give up what makes you objects of suspicion and demoralizes us also. We go to your hospitals with the mercenary motive of having an operation performed, but with no object of responding to what is at the back of your mind, even as our children do when they go to Bible classes in their colleges and then laugh at what they read there. I tell you our conversation at home about these missionary colleges is not at all edifying. Why then spoil your good work with other motives?

Mr. Mathews was curious to know if Gandhiji followed any spiritual practices and what special reading he had found helpful.

G. I am a stranger to yogic practices. The practice I follow is a practice I learnt in my childhood from my nurse. I was afraid of ghosts. She used to say to me: 'There are no ghosts, but if you are afraid, repeat Ramanama.' What I learnt in my childhood has become a huge thing in my mental firmament. It is a sun that has brightened my darkest hour. A Christian may find the same solace from the repetition of the name of Jesus and a Muslim from the name of Allah. All these things have the same implications and they produce identical results under identical circumstances. Only the repetition must not be a lip expression, but part of your very being. About helpful readings we have regular readings of the *Bhagavad Gita* and we have now reached a stage when we finish the *Gita* every week by having readings of appointed chapters every morning. Then we have hymns from the various saints of India, and we therein

include hymns from the Christian hymn book. As Khan Saheb is with us, we have readings from the Koran also. We believe in the equality of all religions. I derive the greatest consolation from my reading of Tulsidas's *Ramayana*. I have also derived solace from the New Testament and the Koran. I don't approach them with a critical mind. They are to me as important as the *Bhagavad Gita*, though everything in the former may not appeal to me—everything in the Epistles of Paul for instance, nor everything in Tulsidas. The *Gita* is a pure religious discourse given without any embellishment. It simply describes the progress of the pilgrim soul towards the Supreme Goal. Therefore there is no question of selection.

M. You are really a Protestant

G. I do not know what I am or not; Mr. Hodge will call me a Presbyterian!

M Where do you find the seat of authority?

Pointing to his breast, Gandhiji said.

It lies here. I exercise my judgment about every scripture, including the *Gita*. I cannot let a scriptural text supersede my reason. Whilst I believe that the principal books are inspired, they suffer from a process of double distillation. Firstly, they come through a human prophet, and then through the commentaries of interpreters. Nothing in them comes from God directly. Mathew may give one version of one text and John may give another. I cannot surrender my reason whilst I subscribe to Divine revelation. And above all, 'the letter killeth, the spirit giveth life.' But you must not misunderstand my position. I believe in Faith also, in things where Reason has no place, e.g., the existence of God. No argument can move me from that faith, and like that little girl who repeated against all reason 'yet we are seven' I would like to repeat, on being baffled in argument by a very superior intellect, 'Yet there is God.'

Harijan, 5-12-1936

88. LETTER TO L. A. HOGG

WARDHA,
November 25, 1936

DEAR MR. HOGG,

Thank you for your letter of the 21st instant.

I am sorry we have not made much headway with paper-making. An expert whose services we had secured left us three or four months ago and we are unfortunately now where we were. Our students are manufacturing paper of a sort, but it is not up to much. I could send you samples of various varieties of hand-made paper that we use, but I could not tell you how they are made and the materials from which they are made. We here use waste paper clippings from the local press. We have now here with us a chemist who can make paper out of gunny-bag waste, cotton-seed waste, white rags and such other raw materials available in villages. But he is still a novice and I am afraid I have nothing to communicate to you which you can profitably pass on to your friend in Egypt. For experts in this direction, we have to look to China. The paper on which this is being typed is from a village in the neighbourhood of Poona. It is the best that I have. Our own paper which used to be good when we had our expert here is no good at the present moment. I enclose herewith one sheet of Nepal paper made out of bamboo pulp and another of Junnar paper made out of, I think, tailors' waste which is identical with the one on which this is being typed. The Nizam's State produces very good hand-made paper. Perhaps if you write to the Director of Industries, Hyderabad (Dn.), he would send you a descriptive report on paper-making as cottage industry.

I am sorry about the *Harijan*. I am asking the Manager to see that you get your copy regularly.

Yours sincerely,

Encl. Sample paper sheets

L. A. HOGG, ESQ.
Y.M.C.A.
5 RUSSELL STREET, CALCUTTA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

89. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

November 25, 1936

CHI. AMALA,

You have not given your address. So don't blame me if you get this late. I had your previous letter but I had no time.

I do hope your mother and your pet have come. I do hope you won't have to shift from your present quarters.

Your earnings are good. You must not starve yourself. Take plenty of milk, fruit and greens.

All's well here.

Love.

Blessings from
BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

90. LETTER TO SAM HIGGINBOTTOM

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 26, 1936[1]

DEAR FRIEND,

Just as it was a farm manager's turn to pass a few months at your institute[2] and pick up such knowledge as he could, it is now Shri Mirabai Slade's desire to have her turn, if you will let her come. Our village work whets the appetite for knowledge required for the service. Mirabai is a lover of cattle as also farming. She has a natural aptitude for such work. She is anxious to come as quickly as she can if you can take her. Of course she will pay the necessary charges. The question of housing her may be a difficulty. If she has a room in a professor's house, she will be satisfied.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 8937

[1] As given in the G.N. register

[2] Allahabad Agricultural Institute, Allahabad

91. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

November 26, 1936

MY DEAR ANAND,

Your two letters stay for me. How could you be so cruel to Vidya or she to you and herself and to her progeny? Must love find such unlovely expression! Or are the protagonists of contraceptives justified in their furious advocacy of them? Can love not deny itself? Has it no such power? Or is there absence of love where there is absence of self-restraint? [*sic*] Or is love powerless before the demands of animal passion? You and Vidya are embodiments of emotion. Should emotion take such undesirable turns? What is done cannot be undone. You have now to nurse the child to maturity and nurse Vidya to such health as may be still her lot. That is the least you would do. But I ask you to consider calmly the questions I have framed. If Vidya had no appetite but she could not resist your approach, I would far rather tolerate bigamy than a stormy satisfaction of the animal in you through a helpless mate.

I am powerless to say more or to say anything less. You will share this with Jeramdas. I am not writing to him separately.

Love to you both.

BAPU

SHRI ANAND HINGORANI
C/o SHRI K. B. KEWALRAMANI
P.O. CANAL COLONY
FEROZEPORE
PUNJAB

From a microfilm. Courtesy: National Archives of India and Anand T. Hingorani

92. LETTER TO DR. HARILAL ADALJA

November 26, 1936

BHAI HARILAL,

I hope you are quite well now. The best and the simplest means to be with God is to serve His creatures as they are beings no different from us.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G N 93

93. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

November 26, 1936

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

You wrote to me after a long time. I have followed what you say about your activity. Now stick to what you have taken up. Improve your health. For that you should be free from mental tension.

A letter for Balram is enclosed.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W 391. Courtesy: Bhagwanji P Pandya

94. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

November 26, 1936

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your letter. However busy I may be I will never find it burdensome to reply to your letter. It is true that this place is crowded. But how would it become more so by your coming? In spite of that, if you feel like it, come after December. I may have to go to Faizpur around December 10. You could come even then. You will improve your

health while at Segaon, won't you? I shall be at Segaon in January in any case.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3487

95. LETTER TO MANSHANKER J. TRIVEDI

November 26, 1936

BHAI MANSHANKER,

Your conclusions can no doubt be regarded as correct. I have always held myself responsible for Harilal's being what he is. I no doubt have a share in his sins. I am undergoing punishment for that and will have to do so in the future also. I will not consider that a punishment at all which is inflicted by others. I am being punished by my own conscience. I do not see anything confidential in your letter though I will not take up the pages of *Harijan* to reply to it. This reply should be enough for you and other gentlemen like you.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

SHRI MANSHANKER J. TRIVEDI
106 VITHALBHAI PATEL ROAD
BOMBAY

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 4753

96. LETTER TO MIRZA ISMAIL

November 27, 1936

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter of 9th instant. I await your further letter as also information about the images.

You were good enough to tell me that I was free to make use of your workshops, etc., to make researches and get such assistance as was easily available. I know Mr. M. Frydman[1] of your electrical department. He is a lover of villages and has the village mind. Though he has been helping me with his

[1] Gandhiji gave him the name "Bharatanand".

ideas for some years and has recently made me some village tools, I would like you, if it is proper, to instruct him and the Director of Industries to give me or the Village Industries Association such assistance as they can appropriately render. Being in a village myself I do need such assistance fairly often.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SIR M. ISMAIL
DEWAN, MYSORE

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

97. LETTER TO MARGARET SANGER

WARDHA,
November 27, 1936

DEAR SISTER,

It was very thoughtful of you to send me an assortment of your choice dried fruit. Agatha Harrison is here just now and I remarked to her, "Whilst Mrs. Sanger went away from me without taking anything, you see how much I am taking from her even though she is so many miles away." You may judge who is the better of us two, of course apart from the natural superiority of the sex to which you belong. I have gone through your reproduction of the interview[1] in *Asia*. My hurried reading left on me the impression that it was a faithful reproduction.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

MRS. MARGARET SANGER
BIRTH CONTROL CLINICAL RESEARCH BUREAU
17 WEST 16TH STREET
NEW YORK CITY

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXII, pp. 156-60.

98. LETTER TO P. G. VENKATADESIKAN

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 27, 1936

DEAR VENKATADESIKAN,

I was glad to hear from you.

I hope you will stick to your spinning, propagating khadi and assiduously learning Hindi.

Yours,
BAPU

SHRI P. G. VENKATADESIKAN
3 CHAKRAPANI NAIDU GARDEN
PAPER MILLS ROAD
PERAMBUR
MADRAS

From a photostat: G.N. 10845

99. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

November 27, 1936

CHI. NARAHARI,

I have your letter. I follow your point about Lalji.[1] We must succeed in bringing his wife to the Ashram. Having read the enclosed letters give them to Lalji-Lakshmi. It seems that we shall have to find a husband for Mani also. There will be no difficulty if she learns things and adopts clean habits.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9101

[1] *Vide* p. 7.

100. *A SPUR TO FURTHER PURIFICATION*

If the Travancore proclamation of the religious freedom of Harijans is a matter for great rejoicing, it is also an event calling us to greater humiliation, greater effort and greater purification. It is not the end of untouchability. It is certainly, as C. Rajagopalachari says, 'an indication of the potentiality that exists in us, if only we seek His aid'. It inspires us with hope and faith in our mission. But on no account will it warrant relaxation of effort and vigilance over ourselves. If the proclamation is a result of prayer and purification, if the mute prayer of the selfless workers of Travancore aided by kindred spirits all over India, rather than the advertised meetings and their resolutions, inspired H. H. the Maharaja and his advisers to issue the proclamation (it does not matter whether consciously or unconsciously to them), it follows that greater selflessness and devotion of workers must do the rest.

Let us realize the contents of the rest. We do not yet know how the orthodoxy of Travancore and the Harijans will react to the proclamation. If it is not followed up by suitable response on the part of the public, it can easily become a dead letter. The mere opening of temples will mean nothing, if it does not lead to their purification and that of the priesthood.

The opening of temples in Travancore must lead to their opening in the sister State Cochin and must also lead to the opening of the sister temple of Guruvayyur. These are of a piece, guided by the same tradition and ceremonial. Then come the great temples of Tamil, Telugu and Canarese India. Kashi Vishwanath, Dwarika and Puri temples in the North, West and East still remain closed to the Harijans. Of the big black patches of India Travancore, though a big patch in itself, considered relatively, was a small speck. It has, by the grace of God showing itself through the proclamation of H. H. the Maharaja, become suddenly a bright spot radiating its light throughout India. Will the radiation prove strong enough to affect the big patches I have mentioned?

And the religious freedom, if it is real in the sense that it comes from the heart of orthodoxy, must be followed by the economic and social betterment of the Harijans all over India.

A mere mention of these most important things should be sufficient to chasten us. But it cannot frighten us if we have a living faith in God and our cause.

For this great and glorious task we want more workers—men and women, boys and girls. We want more money, paper, gold, silver, copper, even handfuls of grain, but these too will surely, as also only, come if the workers whom we already have are, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion. Are we all pure in heart? Are we faithful to our trust? Have we faith in the purely spiritual nature of our mission? If the answers can be in the affirmative, all is well. But the cases I have somewhat discussed[1] in these columns and which I am still following up, make me cautious. How will it fare if we have other black sheep among us? We are none without sin. But if we are not men enough publicly and without any attempt to underestimate it, to own up to our guilt, again I ask, how will it fare with us and the cause we have dared to represent? My rejoicing over the proclamation is thus tempered by the necessary sadness induced by a vivid knowledge of what is happening in our midst. No cause for gloom, equally no warrant for over-exultation but the greatest cause for vigilant introspection and a vivid sense of our responsibility rendered greater by the proclamation.

Harijan, 28-11-1936

101. WOMAN IN THE SMRITIS

A correspondent sends me an issue of *Indian Swarajya* published at Bezwada. It contains an article on the place of woman in the *Smritis*. From it I copy the following few extracts without any alteration:

> The wife should ever treat the husband as God, though he be characterless, sensual and devoid of good qualities. (*Manu* 5.154)
>
> Women should follow the word of their husbands. This is their highest duty. (*Yajnavalkya* 1.18)
>
> A woman has no separate sacrifice, ritual or fasting. She gains a high place in heaven by serving the husband. (*Manu* 5.145)
>
> She who fasts and performs rituals, while the husband lives, cuts off the life of the husband. She goes to hell. A woman who is after the sacred waters should wash the feet or the whole body of the husband and drink the water; and she attains the highest place. (*Atri* 136-137)

[1] "One Thing Needful", pp. 10-1.

There is no higher world for the woman than that of the husband. She who displeases the husband cannot go to his world after death. So she should never displease the husband. (*Vasistha* 21-14)

That woman who prides in her father's family and disobeys the husband should be made by the king a prey to the dogs in the presence of a big assembly of people. (*Manu* 8 371)

None should eat the food offered by a woman who disobeys the husband Such a woman is to be known as a sensualist (*Angiras* 69)

If the wife disobeys the husband when he is given to bad habits or becomes a drunkard or is suffering from physical ailment, then, for three months she should be deprived of her valuable clothes and jewels and kept away (*Manu* 10 78)

It is sad to think that the *Smritis* contain texts which can command no respect from men who cherish the liberty of woman as their own and who regard her as the mother of the race; sadder still to think that a newspaper published on behalf of orthodoxy should publish such texts as if they were part of religion. Of course there are in the *Smritis* texts which give woman her due place and regard her with deep veneration. The question arises as to what to do with the *Smritis* that contain texts that are in conflict with other texts in the same *Smritis* and that are repugnant to the moral sense. I have already suggested often enough in these columns that all that is printed in the name of scriptures need not be taken as the word of God or the inspired word. But everyone can't decide what is good and authentic and what is bad and interpolated. There should therefore be some authoritative body that would revise all that passes under the name of scriptures, expurgate all the texts that have no moral value or are contrary to the fundamentals of religion and morality, and present such an edition for the guidance of Hindus. The certainty that the whole mass of Hindus and the persons accepted as religious leaders will not accept the validity of such authority need not interfere with the sacred enterprise. Work done sincerely and in the spirit of service will have its effect on all in the long run and will most assuredly help those who are badly in need of such assistance.

Harijan, 28-11-1936

102. THE IDEAL BHANGI[1]

The ideal Bhangi of my conception would be a Brahmin *par excellence*, possibly even excel him. It is possible to envisage the existence of a Bhangi without a Brahmin. But without the former the latter could not be. It is the Bhangi who enables society to live. A Bhangi does for society what a mother does for her baby. A mother washes her baby of the dirt and insures his health. Even so the Bhangi protects and safeguards the health of the entire community by maintaining sanitation for it. The Brahmin's duty is to look after the sanitation of the soul, the Bhangi's that of the body of society. But there is a difference in practice; the Brahmin generally does not live up to his duty, the Bhangi does, willy-nilly no doubt. Society is sustained by several services. The Bhangi constitutes the foundation of all services.

And yet our woebegone Indian society has branded the Bhangi as a social pariah, set him down at the bottom of the scale, held him fit only to receive kicks and abuse, a creature who must subsist on the leavings of the caste people and dwell on the dung-heap. He is without a friend, his very name has become a term of reproach. This is shocking. It is perhaps useless to seek the why and wherefore of it. I certainly am unaware of the origin of the inhuman conduct, but I know this much that by looking down upon the Bhangi we- Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians and all—have deserved the contempt of the whole world. Our villages have today become seats of dirt and insanitation and the villagers come to an early and untimely death. If only we had given due recognition to the status of the Bhangi as equal to that of a Brahmin as in fact and justice he deserves, our villages today no less than their inhabitants would have looked a picture of cleanliness and order. We would have to a large extent been free from the ravages of a host of diseases which directly spring from our uncleanliness and lack of sanitary habits.

I therefore make bold to state without any manner of hesitation or doubt that not till the invidious distinction between the

[1] Translated from Gujarati by Pyarelal. The original appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 29-11-1936.

Brahmin and the Bhangi is removed will our society enjoy health, prosperity and peace, ~~and be~~ happy.

What qualities should such an honoured servant of society exemplify in his person? In my opinion an ideal Bhangi should have a thorough knowledge of the principles of sanitation. He should know how a right kind of latrine is constructed and the correct way of cleaning it. He should know how to overcome and destroy the odour of excreta and the various disinfectants to render them innocuous. He should likewise know the process of converting night-soil and urine into manure.

But that is not all. My ideal Bhangi would know the quality of night-soil and urine. He would keep a close watch on these and give a timely warning to the individual concerned. Thus he will give a timely notice of the results of his examination of the excreta. That presupposes a scientific knowledge of the requirements of his profession. He would likewise be an authority on the subject of disposal of night-soil in small villages as well as big cities and his advice and guidance in the matter would be sought for and freely given to society. It goes without saying that he would have the usual learning necessary for reaching the standard here laid down for his profession. Such an ideal Bhangi, while deriving his livelihood from his occupation, would approach it only as a sacred duty. In other words, he would not dream of amassing wealth out of it. He would consider himself responsible for the proper removal and disposal of all the dirt and night-soil within the area which he serves and regard the maintenance of healthy and sanitary condition within the same as the *summum bonum* of his existence.

How may we have this ideal Bhangi? Only when we have produced an army of Appa Patwardhans[1]. To clothe the Bhangi with the dignity and respect due to him is the especial task and privilege of the educated class. Some members of the class would first themselves master the science of sanitation to educate the Bhangi round them in the same. They would carefully study their present condition and the causes underlying it and set themselves to the task of eradicating the same by dint of inexhaustible perseverance and patience that never looks back and knows no defeat. They would teach them the laws of cleanliness. Our Bhangis do not today possess even good brooms or other suitable means for the removal of night-soil. The latrines themselves are wretched. The site round the Bhangis'

[1] Sitaram Purushottam Patwardhan

quarters is no better than a cesspool of dirt. All this can only go if some of the educated class give themselves up to the task of redeeming the Bhangi from his present plight and thus redeeming society from its terrible insanitation. Surely this is work enough to satisfy the highest ambition of one who has the spirit of service in him.

Harijan, 28-11-1936

103. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 28, 1936

DEAR CHARLIE,

I am glad you were able to carry Isudes with you to a certain extent. Of course there can't be any question of *shuddhi*.

You must get rid of this tiredness. It means that you need both mental and physical rest. If it can be had by delaying departure by a week and taking rest at Wardha or Ahmedabad, you must take it unless you will be too late for your first lecture.[1]

You won't put an undue strain on yourself. Love to Gurudev.

Love.

MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 992

104. LETTER TO VINOBA BHAVE

November 28, 1936

CHI. VINOBA,

Balkrishna is fine. I hope you have received the dates. Let me know whether they are of a better quality. Where is the need for my coming there early? I promised Dev and Dastane that I should be there towards the first week of December, but the stipulation was that you felt the need of my presence there. My coming causes unnecessary excitement. Do you think I should come? I do not think so. When I come, possibly a few good workers will get tied up on my account. Khan Saheb will be with me. Pyarelal will be there. Sahasrabuddhe

[1] The addressee was going to England to deliver a course of lectures in Cambridge on Pastoral Theology.

and Vaikunthlal are of the opinion that I should not make the visit before the 21st. Think over all this and write to me and persuade Dev and Dastane.

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

105. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

November 28, 1936

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I understand your distress over Travancore. Rajaji too is distressed. But I cannot even think of any other course. How can I conceal my feelings when I must speak out?[1] I am so heartily thankful that I have assumed the responsibility for having the order carried out. Now read the laws that have been enacted for temple-goers and tell me if my caution was justified or not. Do we not see everywhere that an order says one thing while the laws framed for its implementation are such as to negate it? It is not as if I was ignorant of the difficulties of the Durbar. But the knowledge should make us vigilant.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original. C.W. 8025. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

106. BIRTH-CONTROL THROUGH SELF-CONTROL

The following letter[2] has been lying with me for a long time:

In the mean time, I visited Ahmedabad. I did not have the occasion to express my views on the above subject. But, as mentioned by the correspondent, I certainly believe that birth-control can be made effective only through self-control. Any other means of birth-control is likely to result in harm. One can easily discern the evil effects of artificial birth-control methods where they have taken root. It is not surprising that those who advocate birth-control without abstention cannot see these, as it has gained footing in the name of morality.

[1] The reference is to Gandhiji's interview and article on the Travancore proclamation; *vide* pp 27 and 83-4.

[2] Not translated here. The correspondent had noted with disapproval the setting up of a Birth-control League in Ahmedabad which in his view must lead to an increase of licentiousness.

It is an exaggeration to say that the object of the committee formed in Ahmedabad is what the correspondent states it to be. But whatever its aim may be, its activities will definitely result in an increase in sexual indulgence. Water when thrown on the ground is bound to follow a downward course; similarly, if means are invented to facilitate sexual indulgence, it is bound to increase.

Similarly, it is an exaggeration to believe that doctors and vaidyas do not preach self-restraint as it is likely to affect their incomes adversely. Doctors and vaidyas have never considered it their field to advocate self-restraint. But I see clear signs of these men tending more and more to do so. Their field is to diagnose diseases and cure them. If they do not assign primary importance to indulgence and lack of self-restraint as a cause of disease, a time will come when they will have to stop their practice. As society becomes increasingly intelligent, it will not rest satisfied unless diseases are completely eradicated. And, so long as society does not turn towards self-restraint and does not observe the rules to prevent diseases, it is impossible for it to remain healthy. This is so clear that ultimately everyone will be able to see it and honest doctors will give it the utmost importance. I have no doubt that birth-control without self-control will contribute largely towards increase in sexual indulgence. Hence, it is my humble opinion that the Ahmedabad League can obtain the desired results if it goes deeper into the problem and, taking into account the dangerous consequences of lack of self-control, spends its time in teaching women the necessity of self-control and telling them how simple it is.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 29-11-1936

107. *ONE ENEMY ALONE*

A man has only one enemy and only one friend: and that is himself. These are not my words but of all the Shastras. A person becomes his own enemy when he deceives himself. He becomes his own friend when he puts himself in the hands of the God who is within him. The necessity for writing this has arisen from the two instances of fall which I have mentioned and other such instances, major as well as minor, which I come across. As I go deeper into these, I find that the persons

concerned are practising self-deception. The results of my investigations have yet to be known.

All of us commit sins. But we degrade ourselves more when we try to appear innocent though we are really guilty. A man degrades himself with two women who regard him as a brother, a saint, a sincere worker, a teacher or guru, and then marries one of them. I regard it as a device to hide one's licentious conduct. To call such a relationship marriage is to abuse the sacrament of marriage. I know such things are happening at many places these days. But any adding to sin or multiplying it will not make it accepted as virtue. If the whole world practises sin it may well become a custom, nevertheless it will remain sin. I am aware that this does not apply to all acts which are regarded as sins. I have in mind things which have been regarded as sinful for generations and which are considered as such by society today.

Teachers develop secret relationships with their women students. That in some cases these relationships are given the form of marriage does not make them virtuous. It is my firm opinion that just as husband-wife relationship is not possible between brothers and sisters, so should it not be possible in the case of teachers and pupils. If this golden rule is not faithfully adhered to, educational institutions will eventually collapse; no girl will be safe from her men teachers. A teacher's position is such that students—both boys and girls—are constantly under his influence; they regard the teacher's words as gospel truth. So they do not entertain any doubts about any liberties taken by the teacher. Hence such relationships are regarded, and should be regarded, as uncondonable where the soul is respected as something apart from the body. When such relationship creeps into an institution such as the Harijan Sevak Sangh, it has far-reaching evil effects and ruins its activities.

I am thoroughly convinced that behind the unexpected event of the temples of Travancore being thrown open to Harijans lies the strength of the service of silent workers. Such workers are scattered all over the country. They do not want fame, they have no false sense of pride. They find their fulfilment in service alone. As a result of their *punya* God came to dwell in the heart of the Maharaja of Travancore and made him throw open the temples to Harijans. This step is the first glimpse of the glory of God. It is an invitation to the workers to become more alert, purer and more dedicated. No workers, whether men or women, can rest in peace as long as all the temples

are not thrown open to Harijans, hypocrisy, wickedness and filth are not banished from all the temples and untouchability is not eradicated from the very marrow of Hinduism. And, they should realize that the delay caused in washing away the sin which has existed since time immemorial is due to the sins of the workers which have come to light recently. Who knows, there may be other such workers concealing their sins. The workers should not cling to their weaknesses by looking upon their sins as virtues, they should not fall and drag their work with them by hiding their sins, nor should they satisfy themselves with admitting their sins only partially.

Some persons are hesitant to acknowledge publicly their own sins, some others put a gloss over them while acknowledging them. Religion proclaims: Magnify your sins into mountains even when they are as small as mustard seeds. If you sincerely confess your guilt you will look as clean as a cloth after its dirt has been washed off. And your public confession and repentence will be like a shield to guard you in future.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 29-11-1936

108. PURSE FOR KATHIAWAR'S DARIDRANARAYANA

A sum of Rs. 7178-7-6 collected by Shri Narandas Gandhi for the *Daridranarayana* on the occasion of Rentia Barash has been handed over to Sardar Vallabhbhai for use in Kathiawar. I was to decide how that money should be disbursed.

Those who collected the fund had thought that this sum could be utilized for khadi and Harijan work. I have been given to understand that at the moment money is not needed for khadi work. The Spinners' Association is doing its utmost to meet the needs of khadi work in Kathiawar. Moreover, I understand that there is a provision in the late Mohanlal Pandya Memorial Fund for developing khadi activities in Kathiawar. I know, however, that funds are badly needed for Harijan work in Kathiawar. Hence, I have decided to hand over the above-mentioned purse for the welfare of the Harijans to Shri Nanalal Kalidas Jhaveri, the Sangh's representative from Kathiawar.

Let me correct an error along with this. Shri Narandas writes to say that he had contributed 200,000 yards and not an equal number of rounds[1]. A round measures four feet whereas

[1] As mentioned by Mahadev Desai in his "Weekly Letter" in *Harijan*, 24-10-1936.

a yard is only three feet. And spinning had been carried on in the school for three months, not two.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 29-11-1936

109. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
November 29, 1936

MY DEAR REBEL,

I will write to Shummy. My going to Faizpur early is an uncertainty. If I go I will send you full instructions. Do not worry.

Your report of Manganwal is fine reading. May I publish it over your name? It can't be anonymous.

Whenever you leave you should see me on your way to Ahmedabad. I am quite clear that you may not leave Ahmedabad without finishing your work. It would be improper for you to do so. Whilst your meeting lasts, it should receive your undivided attention. What does it matter even if you come the last day

I have no time for more.

So with cartloads of love,

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3757. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6913

110. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

November 29, 1936

MY DEAR REBEL,

I gave you a hurried note this afternoon.

V.'s letter herewith. You will talk to me about it when we meet.

Yes, I read J.'s letter as you did. The meaning has been wilfully perverted by the Press.

If you do not meet me at Faizpur, your stopping at Wardha would not mean any loss of time. And coming to Wardha and Segaon is certainly easier than Bhusaval and Faizpur. And living at Faizpur is none too comfortable. Let us [see] what is in store for you.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3756. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6912

111. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

November 29, 1936

BHAI BAPA,

I have got your letter regarding Govind Babu. I have brought him up as my son. You do know of his previous misadventure. I asked Baba Raghavdas to make an inquiry. He too gave an unsatisfactory report. I did not know at all that he wanted to become a member of Parliament. All those to whom he had gone know him as my man. I took action[1] when the complaint came from Bombay. For my part I do desire that he should hand over possession of the Ashram. As you share the unhappiness of everybody around, I must write to you. Mustn't I?

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI THAKKAR BAPA
HARIJAN NIVAS
KINGSWAY, DELHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1172

112. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

November 30, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

The scorpion incident is a serious one. Let Jhaverbhai thoroughly inquire into the matter. Who was in charge of the cooking? It is quite possible that Bhansali is under the effect of it. Did this happen during the night or in the morning? We would not leave Vrajlal so easily. Whatever happens, let it happen here. Let him carry on his propaganda. We can't shut up anyone in a cage, can we?

Corrections took a long time, so with great difficulty I am able to write what I am sending.

Blessings from
BAPU

[1] *Vide* "Beware of Beggars", p. 63.

[PS.]

It is three o'clock. I am still writing and therefore I am getting all that checked here.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S N. 11504

113. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

November 30, 1936

CHI. KAKA,

I just read your article on eroticism. We shall have to discuss it.

It is not necessary to make any change in your diet. At any rate I approve of what you take at present. This should suffice for the present.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N 7695

114. LETTER TO SATYAMURTI[1]

SEGAON,
December 1, 1936

The terms[2] offered by you appear to me to be reasonable, but uplift of the Harijans is an equivocal expression. The Congress is pledged to the removal of untouchability, root and branch. It is part of the original programme. I do hope that

[1] President of the Tamil Nad Congress Committee

[2] The terms formulated by the addressee were as follows:

(1) The Congress will always have the uplift of Harijans as an integral part of its programme.

(2) No plan of non-co-operation or boycott of legislatures undertaken by the Congress need bind the Harijan members, if they do not agree to abide by such decisions.

(3) Harijan members will be free to act in matters requiring help of the Government for the special relief and uplift of the Harijan community, despite any party rules to the contrary in respect of other Congress members.

(4) The Harijan members of the Congress party will have full freedom of opinion and vote in respect of matters specially affecting the Harijan community, where they differ from the policy adopted by the party, should any such difference arise.

the primary elections will be uncontested. Why should your terms be confidential? I would advise absolutely open dealings in a question in which a vast mass of people are affected.

The Hindu, 4-12-1936

115. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 1, 1936

CHI. KANTI,

I had your second letter yesterday. I have to answer both your letters here together merely for want of time. I would not have any difficulty in reading your long letters nor would they tire me, because your handwriting is as neat as Mahadev's and you never write nonsense. I was not under any apprehension that you might adopt Islam while you were in Bombay. Amtul Salaam had that fear. I had even rebuked her for that. However, considering the disordered state of your mind, I did not think it an impossibility. But you always have convincing arguments for your changes and the motives of such changes are not immoral. That is why I am able to put up with them. To me all religions are equal, so I would not feel unhappy if one changed one's religion with deliberate knowledge and in a sincere spirit in order to cultivate more detachment and attain God sooner. However there is one thing: one who believes that all religions are equal will have no need to change his religion as it includes other religions. One who has grasped this has no need to change his religion. I told you of my apprehensions about your going there. I still have my fear. It seems that so far you have been able to keep your head above water. If you succeed in doing that till the end, it will be a triumph for you and I shall be immensely satisfied.

Take it that for me it will have no value if you drain your energies and come first in all the subjects. It has been truly said that the body is verily the first means necessary for the performance of dharma.[1]

Eat wherever you want. Stay where you wish. But remain healthy.

I have not given permission to Amtul Salaam to go anywhere. However, I have not debarred her from going to Trivandrum

[1] शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्मसाधनम् ।

although I have issued several other injunctions. It was of course good that you did not see her. There is no doubt that she is childish and foolish. She would squander one lakh of rupees if she had that amount. Do not encourage her but at the same time do not neglect her. She has been asking me to withdraw the injunction against her seeing you but I did not pay any heed to her.

Your examination result is very good. I had no doubt about it.

You have given a good account of Harilal. God alone can guide him. That is why I do not say anything to him. I had a letter from him recently. There was nothing in it. I have replied to it, an Arya Samajist is carrying on correspondence with me. He may improve if the Arya Samajists guide him properly, although het correspondent writes that that probability is remote. I have forgotten his name but I have noted it down somewhere. Harilal still wants to marry. He wants money and a life of ease and enjoyment. You probably know about his talk with Surendraji. However, it is impossible to set store by his word because he is not consistent.

Lilavati is here. Manu arrived on Monday. Vijaya of Bardoli is also here. Those gentlemen who came to attend on Nanavati and Mirabehn are also here. In a word, there is enough company for us.

Durga and Bablo have also arrived, so Mahadev can be said to have set up house. Occasionally I receive letters from Navin.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati. C.W. 7309. Courtesy. Kantilal Gandhi

116. LETTER TO TARABEHN N. MASHRUWALA

December 1, 1936

CHI. TARI[1],

I have your letter. Do I have to return any of the books you have sent? I shall write to you even if you don't. I cannot bear to see you despair. You ought to make an effort. How old are you that you should lose hope? Come to me if you would not get yourself treated there. For my part I like Dr. Oommen's suggestion. You will have a change of place and also the help of that

[1] Sister of Sushila Gandhi, Gandhiji's daughter-in-law

kind gentleman. And also by the time you return you would have learnt something. Be guided by me. I understand about the Mahila Ashram. I think you wrote a little about it earlier.

You should never give up writing to me. How can we lower the value of our word? By insisting on writing to me, maybe you will become steady and will not accept defeat.

"Never say die even if you have to give up your life."

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G.N. 6698. Also C.W. 4343 Courtesy: Kanubhai N. Mashruwala

117. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS[1]

[*December 1, 1936*][2]

QUESTION: Do you see a reason for Christian workers in the West to come here, and if so what is their contribution?

ANSWER: In the manner in which they are working, there would seem to be no room for them. Quite unconsciously they do harm to themselves and so to us. It is perhaps impertinent for me to say that they do harm to themselves, but quite pertinent to say that they do harm to us. They do harm to those amongst whom they work and those amongst whom they do not work, i.e., the harm is done to the whole of India. They present a Christianity of their belief but not the message of Jesus as I understand it. The more I study their activities the more sorry I become. There is such a gross misunderstanding of religion on the part of those who are intelligent, very far advanced and whose motives need not be questioned. It is a tragedy that such a thing should happen in the human family.

Q. You are referring to things as they are at present. Do you visualize a situation in which there is a different approach?

A. Your ability is unquestioned. You can utilize all those abilities for the service of India which she would appreciate. That can only happen if there are no mental reservations. If you come to give education, you must give it after the Indian pattern. You should sympathetically study our institutions and suggest changes. But you come with preconceived notions and seek to destroy. If people from the West came on Indian terms, they

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter". The questions were asked by visitors interested in Christian mass movements.

[2] From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary

would supply a felt want. When Americans come and ask me what service they could render, I tell them: 'If you dangle your millions before us, you will make beggars of us and demoralize us.' But in one thing I do not mind being a beggar. I would beg of you your scientific talent. You can ask your engineers and agricultural experts to place their services at our disposal. They must not come to us as our lords and masters but as voluntary workers. A paid servant would throw up his job any day, but a volunteer worker could not do so. If such come, the more the merrier. A Mysore engineer who is a Pole[1] has sent me a box of hand-made tools made to suit village requirements. Supposing an engineer of that character comes and studies our tools and our cottage machines and suggests improvements in them, he would be of great service. If you do this kind of work in a religious spirit you will have delivered the message of Jesus.

Q. There is this mood abroad in the world.

A. I would like to see it amongst missionaries in general in India.

Q. What would happen if there is an increase in the process of multiplying Christians?

A. If there is an appreciable increase, there would be blood feuds between Harijans themselves, more savage than the feuds we have in Bombay. Fifty per cent of the residents in Segaon are Harijans. Supposing you stole away 10 Harijans and built a church for them, you would set up father against son, and son against father, and you would find texts in the Bible to support your action. That would be a caricature of Christianity.

Here Gandhiji explained that the whole story of the sudden uprush of spiritual hunger among the millions of untouchables was absurd A speech at Central Hall, Westminster, made by Bishop Pickett, of which he had read a report in the *Church Times*, had greatly shocked him He said:

He has made such extravagant statements that I would want a demonstration of them—even of the statement that millions were seeking to be converted.[2]

Q. Apart from the contribution through the realm of scientific achievement, evangelism seems to be out of the question in establishing relationships between East and West?

[1] Maurice Frydman

[2] *Vide* also "What Is a Miracle?", 19-12-1936.

A. I do say that. But I speak with a mental reservation. I cannot only reconcile myself to—I must recognize—a fact in nature which it is useless to gainsay—I mean proper evangelization. When you feel you have received peace from your particular interpretation of the Bible, you share it with others. But you do not need to give vocal expression to it. Your whole life is more eloquent than your lips. Language is always an obstacle to the full expression of thought. How, for instance, will you tell a man to read the Bible as you read it, how by word of mouth will you transfer to him the light as you receive it from day to day and moment to moment? Therefore all religions say: 'Your life is your speech.' If you are humble enough you will say you cannot adequately represent your religion by speech or pen.

Q. But may not one in all humility say, 'I know that my life falls far short of the ideal; let me explain the ideal I stand for'?

A. No. You bid good-bye to humility the moment you say that life is not adequate and that you must supplement it by speech. Human species need not go to animals and shout to them: 'We are humans.' The animals know them as humans. The language of the soul never lends itself to expression. It rises superior to the body. Language is a limitation of the truth which can be only represented by life.

Q. How then is experience to be passed on from generation to generation without some articulate expression?

A. There is no occasion for articulate expression. Life is its own expression. I take the simile of the rose I used years ago. The rose does not need to write a book or deliver a sermon on the scent it sheds all around, nor on the beauty which everyone who has eyes can see. Well, spiritual life is infinitely superior to the beautiful and fragrant rose, and I make bold to say that the moment there is a spiritual expression in life, the surroundings will readily respond. There are passages in the Bible, the *Gita*, the *Bhagavata*, the Koran, which eloquently show this. "Wherever," we read, "Krishna appeared, people acted like those possessed." The same thing about Jesus. But to come nearer home, why are people touched as if by magic wherever Jawaharlal goes? They sometimes do not even know he has come, and yet they take sudden fire from the very thought that he is coming. Now there it may not be described as a spiritual influence, but there is a subtle influence and it is unquestionably

there, call it by what name you like. They do not want to hear him, they simply want to see him And that is natural. You cannot deal with millions in any other way. Spiritual life has greater potency than Marconi waves. When there is no medium between me and my Lord and I simply become a willing vessel for his influences to flow into it, then I overflow as the water of the Ganges at its source. There is no desire to speak when one lives the truth. Truth is most economical of words. There is thus no truer or other evangelism than life.

Q. But if a person were to ask the source of such a life, what then?

A. Then you will speak, but your language will be well thought out. You will yourself feel that. It defies expression. But then the questioner probes further, if he is a searcher. Then you will draw him to you. You will not need to go to him. Your fame will so spread that people from all parts of the world will flock to see you and listen to you. You will then speak to them. Take Aurobindo Ghose. Many from all parts go to him. He does not even see them, except on two days during the year, and never talks to them.

Q. You see any indication that there is a drawing together of those who have intimations of a higher life?

A. Yes. But not through these organizations. They are a bar to the process. Why am I at Segaon? Because I believe that my message will have a better chance of penetrating the masses of India, and maybe through them to the world. I am otherwise not a man capable of shutting myself up. But I am so downright natural that once I feel a call I go forward with it, whatever happens. Mr. Hofmeyer[1] of the South African Delegation appreciated my desire not to move out; he did not resent it as pride or indifference. Economy of words and action has therefore its value. Only it has to be natural.

Harijan, 12-12-1936

[1] He visited India in September 1936; *vide* Vol. LXIII, p. 351.

TER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 2, 1936

ave kept coming. I have had no misgivings
opriety of the steps taken in connection with
harm and no good can come if the limit
s not adhered to.
the correspondence with Bapi Needu. Keep
rt in a file there.
f Govind Babu is becoming obvious. He him-
ould come and make a clarification. I invited
rites: "I do not wish to come to you. Your
er. I am not satisfied with social activities"
other hand evidence against him is piling
e this since you have taken interest in this

BAPU

f the Gujarati: G.N. 1173

LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

December 2, 1936

is as I eat. Parameshwari Prasad has been
days. He had a talk with Jamnalalji and
tained the opinion of experts like Smith,
s scheme is scientific and practicable. Go
can find the time. Parameshwari Prasad
-holders should donate their shares, thereby
company into a public association. With
would be made and public donations would
st of the capital. Jamnalalji and I have deci-
you decide in the matter. Now about the
anced. I have advised that it may be
ans and that it should be repaid. Even if the

whole set-up should have to be wound up, it would remain a first charge along with Nathuramji's money. And if it turned into a public association it would perforce have to assume the responsibility for all debts. Parameshwari Prasad is going to Calcutta. He will explain the matter to you. Having heard him you will do what you think best.

This has been taken down by your daughter Anasuya.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W 8024. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

120. LETTER TO KAMALABEHN

December 3, 1936

CHI. KAMALABEHN,

I hope you have received my telegram. What consolation can I give you? Does death spare anyone? Even so we would like to go before our dear ones. But what difference does it make to one who lives only for service whether he dies early or late. May God bless you with health and devotion to service.

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati. Pyarelal Papers Courtesy: Pyarelal

121. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI A. MEHTA

SEGAON,
December 3, 1936

BHAI BHAGWANJI,

Amidst heavy pressure of work I write this much. You are suspicious by nature and the only remedy for that is work. Bhagwan[1] alone knows, not Bhagwanji, if unknowingly I have done injustice. Who would know the pangs of child-birth? How can you invite as President a man who has just been nursing the sick[2] and expect a written speech from him? I am not annoyed

[1] God

[2] Gandhiji had nursed Mirabehn and Nanavati when they were ill in October.

that you have written to this effect. Only please forgive me if I am not always able to write even this much.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N. 5831. Also C.W. 3054. Courtesy: Bhagwanji A. Mehta

122. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

WARDHAGANJ,
December 4, 1936

Certain definite matters have been referred to us by the Ahmedabad Mill-owners' Association and the Ahmedabad Labour Association for arbitration. We had three days' conference with the respective representatives at Wardha and Segaon. We hope to deliver our Awards[2] not later than the 15th instant.

The Hindu, 5-12-1936

123. DISCUSSION WITH STUDENTS OF VILLAGE WORKERS' TRAINING SCHOOL[3]

[*Before December 5, 1936*]

For some time past a party of students of Village Workers' Training School has been visiting villages in the neighbourhood on appointed evenings reciting the Tulsi *Ramayana* and *bhajans* . . . Now that the boys' examinations are drawing near, a proposal came to drop the visits for the time being. Said Gandhiji to them:

This has shocked me. If your studies cannot stand this brief relaxation, and you must pore over your books all the twenty-four hours because of the approach of the examination, those studies are worth nothing. But apart from this, your proposal augurs ill for the villagers. You have promised to go to them on appointed evenings, and now you are going to break the promise. I tell you the few visits you have paid to them will be as inauspicious as the appearance of the comet is supposed to be. They may be worse. The comet appears suddenly

[1] This was a joint statement issued by Gandhiji and Kasturbhai Lalbhai, an industrialist and mill-owner of Ahmedabad.

[2] For Gandhiji's Award, *vide* "Award in Labour Dispute", 26-12-1936.

[3] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

almost without notice, Nature's known laws do not seem to govern it. But you gave them a promise and now if you go back on it, they will feel that it is not for them that you go there but just to please your own fancies. That feeling will breed indifference and ultimately disgust. I tell you these visits are more important than the visits to distribute medicines to the villages. The medicines are good for their physical ailments, *Ramayana* is good for their spiritual ailments. If you had not made the beginning I should not have asked you to do so. They never invited you or expected you to go there, but now that the beginning has been made you should keep it up. These visits give you a living touch with the people; rather than drop them you must think out how you can make them more and more useful and successful.

He next spoke to them in answer to a question about the profession of the Bhangi. He asked them to study the article[1] on the Ideal Bhangi that he had written for the current issue of *Harijan* and to fill in the details if they were wanting He regaled them with stories of the Bhangi who was serving the village, and who was now being asked to go for negligent work, and of the new Bhangi who asked for Rs. 30 a month and ultimately became ready to accept Rs 15. [He said]

Now it is your work to mend these people's ways, and you cannot do so unless you are good Bhangis yourselves. As I have explained in my article, I do not want the Bhangi to be the indifferent and perfunctory scavenger that he is today. I want him to be a healer of ailments, and a physician besides being an ideal scavenger. In ancient times the village barber used to be also the village surgeon. I want the good Bhangi to be the village health inspector and physician. You have to pave the way for this. Today we have reduced him to the lowest level and we have gone down with him. He is content to live in squalor and dirt, we are doing no better. You cannot reform him unless you reform yourselves, unless you set about the task with a passion that you momentarily import into your studies. The task of rural sanitation is no easy one, it means nothing less than raising the village Bhangi to the status of an ideal Bhangi. The whole subject is unexplored; the profession, far from being a dirty one, is a purifying, life-protecting one Only we have debased it. We have to raise it to its true status. I have indicated the lines in my article and I will not repeat here what I have said there.

Harijan, 5-12-1936

[1] *Vide* pp. 86-8.

124. *TEMPLE-ENTRY RULES*

The reader will find in this issue the full text of the rules[1] framed under the famous Travancore Proclamation opening the State temples to Harijans. It is not possible to criticize the rules in anticipation of their application. As with all rules, naturally they lend themselves to an interpretation and application as liberal as the Proclamation itself, and to so narrow an interpretation and application as to make the Proclamation wholly ineffective and thus make things worse than before. There is no warrant whatsoever for fearing any calamitous result. The Proclamation, as I believe it, is in response to the Time Spirit by a Prince imbued with the spirit of reform. It has behind it the sanction of popular approval, if what appears in the Press and what I have learnt from persons who should know can be relied upon.

But as I have already said in these columns the brunt of making the working of the reform successful will fall on the shoulders of the reformers of Travancore. It should be possible to create an atmosphere whereby the rules may never need enforcement by authority. Temples are generally visited by sincere devotees or hypocrites. The former are meticulous in their observance of rules prescribed by custom for fear of losing all merit of temple worship, and the latter have to observe the rules equally meticulously for fear of their being found out. Framing of rules such as we have now to deal with is a novelty of the modern age though absolutely necessary. When the temple doors are opened by a secular proclamation to thousands of people, it becomes necessary also to frame secular rules for its due enforcement. There is no doubt the whole of this great experiment of Travancore requires careful, sympathetic and prayerful handling by all concerned. If the spirit behind is purely religious all will be well. Who can lead in that direction better than the reformers and the Harijans whom they will bring to those temples?

Harijan, 5-12-1936

[1] *Vide* Appendix.

125. SEGAON, NOT SHEGAON

Several correspondents address their letters to me to Shegaon. Now Shegaon is a main line station between Bhusaval and Wardha. I am not living in Shegaon. I am living in Segaon near Wardha. It is not a railway station. It has no post-office, and no telegraph office. All letters and telegrams should therefore be addressed to Wardha.

Harijan, 5-12-1936

126. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

December 5, 1936

DEAR DAUGHTER AMTUL SALAAM,

I have your letter. How shall I please you? I have already told you that you can join me after you have recovered. I cannot, under present conditions, give you the care you can get at home. It is for this reason that I say that your coming to me for the present may not be the right thing.[1]

I felt tired after writing this, and the letter remained unfinished as visitors came. You yourself are the source of your misery. When I speak something frankly you take it in the wrong light. You fail to see the turn my life has taken. I am running no Ashram here and I cannot accommodate here any number of persons I may wish. How could it be that I should call you here and not be able to nurse you? You might say that you need no nursing, but how could I put up with that? I keep no ailing persons here, and to those that are already here I have spoken to the effect that they should go either to Wardha or to their villages. Under such conditions what can I tell you? Recover and then come. If not, tell me where I may arrange to send you for improving your health and I shall do so. It was for this reason that I suggested sending you to Bangalore.[2]

[1] The letter up to this is in Urdu *Bapuke Patra–8 Bibi Amtussalaamke Nam* assigns to this portion the date December 4, without however giving any reasons

[2] *Vide* p. 28.

you yourself are to blame. You do not even
I asked Kanti to go to you.

Blessings from
BAPU

of the Urdu and Gujarati. G.N. 361

LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

December 5, 1936

corrected the enclosed I doubt whether it is
Consult Andrews today or tomorrow. If you
send it to Mott and tell him that I agree to
only if he feels that it is worth publishing.

Blessings from
BAPU

of the Gujarati: S.N 11505

PIERCING THE NOSE AND THE EARS

enya, Shri Badiyani, who is a teacher in the
School there, writes to say:[1]

of this correspondent of using adjectives such
educationist" with reference to Shri Gijubhai
wn an uneducated person like myself, is not
all. Gijubhai wishes to grow old teaching young
why should he not hand over poor girls to the
himself by piercing or allowing them to pierce
s? If Gijubhai claims to be a great child
oes not allow anyone else to share this title, his
to be carefully weighed. In that case it is
under what circumstances and in which year
and ears of his own daughters pierced and in
n what context he wrote the above letter.
e sake of argument, accept that Gijubhai is a
ionist. Nevertheless, why should we take it

ot translated here. The correspondent had stated that
's views on the subject of piercing the nose and the ears
gree with Gandhiji's views on the matter.

for granted that his views can never be wrong? Why should we regard utterances of Mahatmas on every occasion as gospel truth?

How did my advice, which was being acted upon so far, become wrong after the correspondent had seen and read a letter appearing under Gijubhai's name? Had Shri Badiyani found anything wrong with the young girls whose noses and ears had not been pierced?

My advice is that in no matter, whether small or big, should anyone's opinion be given the importance of a gospel truth. Every statement—whether coming from a 'Mahatma' like myself or a great child educationist like Gijubhai—should be weighed in the scales of intelligence, and one which is more reasonable should be accepted. If, later, one comes across even a greater 'Mahatma' or a greater *shastri*, one should not immediately prostrate oneself before him but remain faithful to the person whom one's intelligence has accepted. This is the meaning of an unwavering intelligence. If we do not learn to do so, we shall be left with no faith and our poor intelligence will be rendered ineffective from confusion.

Let us now consider the basic issue. Are only girls fond of jewellery? Is this not true of boys? What can love of jewellery have to do with the piercing of the nose and the ears?

In the West, there are innumerable girls whose noses and ears are not pierced, but we do not hear of their lamenting the fact when they grow up.

If the nose and the ears are to be pierced, how many holes are to be made and why only a specified number of holes? What kind of ornaments can be regarded as adornment and when should these be regarded as ugly?

If the practice of piercing noses and ears is good, then why should we not leave it to the girls to get that done when they are grown up?

Why increase artificial differences between boys and girls? Are there many parents amongst us who get the ears of both their boys and girls pierced? Why then show this favour to or inflict this tyranny on girls alone?

Let me now give my opinion briefly.

In both my ears, taken together, there were six holes. These are still there and I do not like them. But how am I to close these up? My wife's nose and ears were pierced. She must have resented taking off her ornaments. Neither of us feels that either one of us looks less comely for having taken them off. If we do not appear comely in the eyes of others, should we have pity for them even in such matters?

The piercing of the nose and the ears and adorning these with ornaments results in dirt collecting at these places and this sometimes even leads to pus formation. The fact that time is wasted in keeping these clean to avoid such harmful consequences, is also not an unimportant consideration.

Doctors alone can measure the effect of the pain caused to little children by the piercing of their noses and ears.

Women, as it is, are slaves. In the act of piercing their noses and ears, I have never seen anything but a symbol of their slavery. By tying a string to her ear-rings, woman can be pulled like a bullock. Instances exist of cruel husbands having cut off both the ears and the noses of their wives along with the ornaments in them.

I invite those who advocate the piercing of the nose and the ears to look at the frightful ornaments on the noses and ears of Indian women and the dirt in them and then advise me as to what I should do. Should I have them remove their ornaments or should I advise them to wear ear-pendants of pearls in holes large enough for my finger to go through?

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 6-12-1936

129. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON,
December 6, 1936

MY DEAR REBEL,

Your letters. Agatha came in last evening. Andrews is here and so is Carl Heath.

Your two parcels have come. I see in them two blankets! The white one is in use already. Is any of them for the Exhibition? The rest, I take it, is for [the] Exhibition. The books are valuable.

What is the letter about articles? I think I told yout hey were not worth publishing—such, i.e., as I had read.

Shummy's reply has been received. It is good. But he can't bear the separation and he is anxious about your health.

I have to reach Faizpur not before 20th. Hence you will pass through Wardha on your way to Ahmedabad. I leave Wardha on 19th evening. The weather here is very good. I have not seen the lace yet. Is it coming in a separate parcel?

Too busy to say more.
Love.

TYRANT

[PS.]

Yes, J.'s appeal is splendid I understand what you say about V. S. and Manganwal. We must talk about it.

From the original. C.W. 3758 Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6914

130. LETTER TO NARMADABEHN R. PATHAK

December 6, 1936

CHI. NARMADA,

You unworthy girl, you sat before me for hours but could not see that I was pained. Could you not see my unshed tears? You even forgot what you had told me. Carried away by an impulse, you have cast away abiding happiness. And now you feel ashamed even to write to me. What were your words when you came to the Ashram[1] and what have you done? I do not resent your marriage[2]. You yourself admit that your relationship cannot be called a marriage. Both of you have to seek dharma in this sin. I do not say that what I have suggested is the right course. At the same time I have no doubt that the path you have chosen is wrong. Wake up. Perhaps your intellect will fail to understand this but your heart, if it is sound, certainly will. This is only in reply to your message.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 2780. Courtesy. Ramnarayan N. Pathak

131. LETTER TO RAMNARAYAN N. PATHAK

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 6, 1936

BHAI RAMNARAYAN,

I have your letters. Instead of drafting a statement for you from these letters I will write an article[3] and publish it.

[1] In July 1932; *vide* Vol. L, pp. 242 and 244
[2] With Ramnarayan Pathak
[3] *Vide* "Need for Cleansing of Heart", pp. 129-32.

Believe me I weep more than both of you could be doing because all my expectations have been belied. Nothing is lost if your repentance is sincere. But you cannot atone for what you have done by indulging in pleasure. I still stick to my views. You were the guardian of Narmada's chastity. You violated that chastity and while doing so you never thought of what you were doing or what the after-effects would be. Still, the problem of doing justice to Gangabehn remains. If you can become Narmada's teacher, her life, and also yours, will be saved from ruin and Gangabehn will have peace of mind. I do not know Gangabehn. Her letter has not impressed me much, though I see that she feels hurt. To your brother and Hemubhai the blow is still fresh. You will be able to see the light not by lamenting over what you have done but by thinking calmly over it. Nothing but ruin can result if you are carried away by your present notion of marriage. Will you not pay off your debt to the Harijans?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 2782. Courtesy: Ramnarayan N. Pathak

132. DISCUSSION WITH STUDENTS OF VILLAGE WORKERS' TRAINING SCHOOL[1]

[*December 6, 1936*][2]

I have no doubt that this penance[3] willingly undertaken and cheerfully gone through had something to do in bringing about the settlement. I do not mean to imply that it had any direct influence upon the Union Government. It is my firm belief that all real penances produce unseen but sure effects. The penance was undertaken for self-purification, for sharing, however hum-

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

[2] According to the source, students of Village Workers' Training School met Gandhiji on "Sunday last", which would be December 6.

[3] Gandhiji had been asked about the fasts he had undertaken on various occasions, and he had referred to his first fast in connection with a public movement which he had undertaken in 1913, when he had imposed on himself a triple vow of self-suffering till the £3 tax was abolished: (i) to adopt the labourers' dress; (ii) to walk barefoot; (iii) to have only one meal during the day—a meal which during those days consisted of fruits untouched by fire. This penance went on for some months till the tax was removed. *Vide* Vol. XII.

bly, in the suffering of the strikers. That was the only way in which I could prayerfully appeal to God.

The man who performs such penances throws himself wholly and solely on God. He does not undertake such a penance lightly, never in anger, and not certainly with a view to winning any advantage for himself. Then it must not be against an opponent with whom there is no bond of affection. Then it presupposes personal purity and a living belief in non-violence and truth. Obviously there can be no room for pride in such penances.

Harijan, 12-12-1936

133. LETTER TO MURIEL LESTER

[After *December 6, 1936*][1]

DEAR MURIEL,

Though you do not expect to hear from me, I would just like to tell you that Agatha is here just now and walks from Jamnalalji's to Segaon. The cool weather permits such adventures. Andrews was here for four days. Dr. Mott and B. Mathews have been to Segaon. The discussion centres round the untouchability question, i.e., the propriety of Christian Mission interfering with the internal reform movement which has received a tremendous lift by the action of the Travancore State opening all the temples to Harijans.

I hope you are keeping extra fit.

Mira is flourishing after her serious illness.

Love.

BAPU

MISS MURIEL LESTER
C/O N.P.M. 105 EAST 22ND ST.
NEW YORK CITY

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy. Pyarelal

[1] From the reference to Andrews's visit in the past He was still at Segaon on December 6; *vide* "Letter to Amrit Kaur", pp. 110-1.

134. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

December 7, 1936

CHI MAHADEV,

I have not been able so much as to lift my eyes. If you do not like this[1] about Ramnarayan, come and discuss it with me. If you like it send it immediately.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N 11506

135. LETTER TO RADHAKRISHNA BAJAJ

SEGAON,
December 7, 1936

CHI. RADHAKISAN[2],

I do not at all like this fever. Neither you nor Anasuya should fall ill. You may continue with the baths even when you have fever and the water should be cold, not hot. I have also recommended a mud-pack. Come and let me explain if you have no fever tomorrow.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 9122

136. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 8, 1936

MY DEAR ANAND,

I am not angry. I am filled with pain and dismay. Your letter does not mend matters. If you felt for Vidya, your duty was clear even if she was the temptress. You were the guardian

[1] *Vide* "Need for Cleansing of Heart", pp. 129-32.
[2] Jamnalal Bajaj's nephew

of her health. What I stated about contraceptives was not to suggest that you believed in them. It was the measure of my grief that if noble natures like you could not exercise self-restraint, the case for contraceptives came to wear the robe of respectability. Suppose I yield so to some temptation or pity and a frail woman conceives, will not the case for contraceptives seem to be overwhelming? The difference between the two cases will be only one of degree except that my fall will be infinitely more unpardonable than yours.

You must be as practical as you are sentimental, otherwise your sentiment will be nonsensical and may easily become a weakness and a vice.

Of course poor Vidya has my blessings. Let his name connote your and Vidya's victory[1] over the flesh.

Love to you all.

BAPU

[PS.]

I have assumed that Vidya is well.

From a microfilm. Courtesy: National Archives of India and Anand T. Hingorani

137. *ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS*[2]

SEGAON,
[December 8, 1936][3]

Some time ago a group of friends[4] who had come from the World Committee of the Y.M C.A were on a visit to Segaon. . . these friends' questions were refreshingly fresh. . . . Gandhiji had sat down in the village to better the social and economic condition of the villagers, especially Harijans How exactly was this being done?

ANSWER: By living in their midst, by having them to work with us and by working for them.

QUESTION: That is very good. But does that create in them any ambition to live higher?

A. It does.

[1] The child's name was "Vijay" which means "victory", *vide* p. 126.
[2] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"
[3] The date is from the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary.
[4] Mr. and Mrs. Davies Reid and a Japanese named Mr. Saito

Q. Is it not good to provide cheap goods?

A. No. You have no business to deprive us of our hands and feet.

Q. So, then, you are against this machine age I see.

A. To say that is to caricature my views. I am not against machinery as such, but I am totally opposed to it when it masters us. Japan and America and England are doing it today. The agreement between India and Japan is a misnomer. It is an agreement between England and Japan. Japan must wash its hands of this competition. It is harmful to us and harmful to you. No one can make bond-slaves of others without degrading himself. Only a few years ago we manufactured our own cloth, and now we get it from Japan and England. It is an unnatural position. We could make enough cloth for ourselves and the whole world. Our country abounds in natural resources. There is something most hideously wrong in sending one's own cotton out and getting manufactured goods. Nine crore rupees worth of cattle hides are exported from here only to return to us as manufactured products. There is no reason why this should happen.

Q. You would not industrialize India?

A. I would indeed, in my sense of the term. The village communities should be revived. Indian villages produced and supplied to the Indian towns and cities all their wants. India became impoverished when our cities became foreign markets and began to drain the villages dry by dumping cheap and shoddy goods from foreign lands.

Q You would then go back to the natural economy?

A. Yes. Otherwise I should go back to the city. I am quite capable of running a big enterprise, but I deliberately sacrificed the ambition, not as a sacrifice, but because my heart rebelled against it. For I should have no share in the spoliation of the nation which is going on from day to day. But I am industrializing the village in a different way. I shall show you a village product which I am sure compares favourably with American toffee. Tell me if you do not prefer this *gur* (palm-juice *gur*) to American toffee.

Here a little supply of palm-juice *gur* is distributed to the guests who enjoy it. The American lady thoroughly enjoys it . . . her artistic eye catches sight of the palm trees drawn in relief on the wall above the niche in front of her. She appreciates it much.

But there Japan has got plenty to give us. In your arts and handicrafts you are matchless.

Q But I like the mud floor and the mud walls here.

A. Oh yes, it keeps us warm in winter and cool in summer.

Q. That's what the Germans say about their beer.

A. So mother earth is our beer. Is not that splendid?

But the American friend was not going to while away the time joking. He asked earnestly if Gandhiji would not give a message to youths. . . .

A. Simply this that 50 years of unbroken practice of non-violence to the best of my ability has deepened my faith in it, instead of diminishing it. And if my faith is any worth to them, let them not get weak-hearted, but be heartened by my faith. If that faith went away I should bury myself alive.

Q You like the Sermon on the Mount?

A. Oh yes. Even my declaration that I like it is exploited by Christian friends. But let that be. What do you want to ask?

Q I would like you to tell me one passage which has given you more satisfaction than any other.

A. I do not know. But I shall give you a passage that I have often quoted to those who came to convert me to Christianity: 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and everything will be added unto you.' I saw this emphasized in one of Tolstoy's beautiful stories. It gripped me, and also what he wrote underneath it.

The talk then turned to the modern miracle in Travancore, which Gandhiji said was entirely due to the influence of a great woman. The work of the great woman prompted the lady visitor to ask one final question about the women in America

Q Our own women and girls unfortunately do not represent the finest and best in us I wonder if we can reorient our curricula of education for woman, so as to keep her the preserver of the best in us and to enable her to become a good co-worker of man. Could you give us a thought for our girls?

A. I believe in the proper education of women. But I do believe that woman will not make her contribution to the world by mimicking or running a race with men. She can run the race, but she will not rise to the great heights she is capable of by mimicking man. She has to be the complement of man.

Harijan, 27-2-1937

138. LETTER TO KASTURBHAI LALBHAI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 10/11, 1936

BHAI KASTURBHAI,

I am sending herewith my draft of the Award.[1] I am still going through the papers. As I read them I find that the mill-owners do not have any case for the cut, and if they have they have not been able to argue it. If you feel that the papers we have received prove their case it is your duty to guide me. I will in any case be receiving your Award, which will contain your arguments also. If I can understand them I will certainly change my decision. I of course take it that in your Award you will not make use of anything that you may know but of which I am ignorant because in that case I will not be able to understand it at all. I may have heard many things from the Labour Association, but what can I do so long as they are not recorded in the files? I write this not by way of warning but just to know your mind because I shall feel unhappy if both of us do not arrive at the same decision. I want to understand your point of view fully but only on the strength of the evidence we have received. I do not understand how you can demand a cut in wages so long as the Delhi settlement[2] is not proved unworkable. So for me the doors are closed. You will realize my difficulties better after reading my Award. If you think it is necessary for you to come here, do come. If you find that it is necessary to send me a telegram, do that.

As I hear that you have gone to Ahmedabad, I am sending this to two addresses. Send back to me one of the two copies.

See that we adhere to the time limit of the 15th.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

December 11, 1936

[PS.]

I wrote this yesterday. As it missed the train in spite of all efforts, I opened it to write about the Umpire. That

[1] *Vide* "Award in Labour Dispute", 26-12-1936.

[2] Of 13-1-1935. This provided for a reduction of 6¼ per cent in the earnings of all time and piece workers and further promised that wages would be standardized and a scheme for adjustment of wages would be framed.

was left out. Besides Shri Madgavkar, the other names suggested are Shri Motılal Setalvad ànd Shri Patkar. Shankerlal told me that you approve of Shri Govind Ballabh Pant. You may choose any of these.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G.N. 4196

139. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 11, 1936

MY DEAR REBEL,

I have a moment just now for a love letter. I don't understand the possibility of your missing Wardha *en route* to Ahmedabad. If it is to be with Shummy as long as possible you may drop Wardha assuredly. The quickest route from Delhi to Ahmedabad is by metre gauge. From Wardha to Ahmedabad, for you Bombay is more convenient. Tapti valley is cheaper and quite good.

I am glad you are missing Delhi. No feverish running to and fro. V. S. ought not to be pampered.

Ba's cottage is nearly finished. You will like it except for its somewhat city appearance. It has cost more than my hut. I am sure that at least Rs. 100 could have been saved on it. But I could not control the operations unless I was to give my time which I could not afford. But of all this when we meet.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3759. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6915

140. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

December 11, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

What about that borrowed book? Have you received Fowler's article and so forth?

Who among us will go to Faizpur? Even now I do not receive butter regularly. As for oranges, I am buried in them.

Who has arranged that? Every alternate day I get a basket of fifty. That should be stopped. What do they cost?

We should make a deeper study of Mott's correction.[1] I hope Bablo is doing well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11507

141. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

December 11, 1936

CHI. KAKA,

"How can a habit once formed be given up?" How many times have I told you not to put trust in my words reported by another and not to act upon them. Dinkar, *deen*[2] as he is, can neither understand humour nor indulge in it. Now I am compelled to say that you too are wanting in that respect. But has your imagination also become stunted by fasts? Why do you not use your imagination and say to yourself: 'Bapu has been joking; I will certainly go'? And after all you wanted to come to me only to pay your respects. So what would it have mattered even if I did not speak to you? Or even if I despised you? It was your duty to pay me your respects, was it not? Why should you then have hesitated in observing your dharma? You wanted to talk to me, we could have done that also. Even when you write to me I have to read it. Now you have to come here to discharge your debt with interest. Do you wish that while talking to others I should never mention your name even by mistake?

Now you have entered the *vana*.[3] You should be happy. You can now hold converse with the trees. I have read your address to the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad from beginning to end. I liked it. More when we meet.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7968

[1] *Vide* p. 108.

[2] Poor

[3] Gandhiji is referring to the addressee having entered his fifties, the age of *vanprastha*.

142. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

December 11, 1936

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have your two letters in front of me. I understand about Parameshwari and I have sent him a copy of your letter advising him to give up the Delhi farm. I too understand that the financial aspect is not important The important question for me is one of honour and right judgment. I must not abuse your confidence and generosity nor permit anyone else to do so. Let us see what happens. I understand your point about Travancore. Nevertheless it was unnecessary for me to do more than I did. I express my impressions as they occur. As regards the current developments you will read what I have written in the *Harijan.*[1]

Thakkar Bapa writes that you are somewhat indisposed. What is it? And why? Dates are coming regularly and the rug has been received. It is quite warm.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 8026. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

143. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

December 11, 1936

CHI. BRAJKISAN,

Mother must have recovered by now. Why do you wish to go to the Congress? I shall probably reach there on the 20th. At present I have no idea where I shall be lodged or how I shall go. My idea is to walk from the station. If I have room enough and if you have to come you can certainly stay with me. But if it is not really necessary for you to come, you should remain there and do some work of service.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2442

[1] *Vide* "God Is Great", pp. 124-6.

144. PLACE OF CEREALS IN FOOD

Shri Ishverbhai Amin, Chief Chemist and Technical Superintendent of the Alembic Chemical Works of Baroda, has prepared a chemical analysis of principal cereals and pulses commonly used in Gujarat and a note thereon. I give the important part[1] of it below, omitting the detailed analysis as being too technical for the reader. The note gives the reader sufficient information for his guidance.

Harijan, 12-12-1936

145. GOD IS GREAT

The following telegram[2] was received at Poona from the Harijan Sevak Sangh, Trivandrum, on the 3rd instant:

> Actual working Proclamation most successful. Has disproved all fears entertained certain quarters. No part of temple open to any devotee is barred against Ezhavas and Harijans now. Excepting innermost chamber which has been always used only by officiating priest, all other places including *mandaps*, enclosed platforms, corridors are as freely used by newly admitted devotees as by caste Hindus. What is of the greatest importance is that waters in sacred tanks attached to temples are also freely used now by Ezhavas and Harijans. Sense of horror at approach of Harijans seems completely overcome. Harijan devotees do not seem to excite any special reaction in devotees of other castes who engage in worship at the same time. Hardly necessary to say that no special hour or any other distinction made against new entrants. A hopeful feature is priests and other temple officials genuinely wholeheartedly co-operating. They do not seem to suffer any mental strain. . . .
>
> Orthodox people including Namboodiris have as groups or individuals displayed no hostility, most of them expressing themselves in terms of full approval of Proclamation. We see no signs whatever of resentment. Their behaviour is such as if nothing extraordinary had happened, which from what we know of previous orthodoxy is an

[1] Not reproduced here

[2] Only extracts are reproduced here.

astonishing achievement. The noble Proclamation has been followed up by thorough execution.

CHANGANACHERY K. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI, PRESIDENT,
KERALA HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH
M. GOVINDAN, PRESIDENT,
TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH
G. RAMACHANDRAN, SECRETARY,
KERALA HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

The telegram was received too late for publication in the last issue. That is the handicap of having different places of printing and editing.

When the Temple-Entry Proclamation was issued, I had misgivings which I could not and would not suppress. Was it a political document with loopholes and reservations? What would be its effect on the caste Hindus, if it was a superimposed thing? What would be its effect on Harijans? Would it not leave them cold?

Friends took me to task for not sharing their enthusiasm. I could not help it.[1] Not that I had any doubt about the genuine desire of H. H. the Maharani, or the Maharaja, or the Diwan Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Ayyar. Indeed I had the privilege of meeting the Maharani and her young hope, the present Maharaja, when I was in Travancore years ago. The Maharani had even then professed her belief in the reform. I had even jokingly asked the boy, as the Maharaja then was, whether he would remove untouchability and throw open temples when he mounted the *gadi* of Travancore. He had enthusiastically said 'of course'. Have I not known Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Ayyar since 1915 or 1916 as a reformer? My misgivings had a deeper meaning which I had tried to express. It may be that it was my want of faith in the people. There certainly was in the adequacy of the effort and purity of reformers working under the aegis of the Harijan Sevak Sangh.

But the latest happening described in the foregoing telegram with such wealth of detail has dispelled all doubt. The rules[2] reproduced last week have lost their formidableness. The actuality has surpassed all expectations. The enthusiasm of the Harijans, the absence of all opposition to their entrance to the farthest limit permissible to the highest caste, and the willing, nay, the hearty, co-operation of the officiating priests, show the utter genuineness of the great and sweeping reform. What seemed

[1] *Vide* "Letter to G. D. Birla", p. 89.
[2] *Vide* Appendix.

impossible for man has been made possible by God. Royal proclamations cannot convert tens of thousands of people. Here, therefore, is an instance of mass conversion of caste Hindus. It is real because it is spontaneous.

Only a few years ago in Vaikom the caste Hindus had threatened violence if Harijans crossed even certain roads leading to the Vaikom temple. Now that very temple has been opened to Harijans on absolutely the same terms as to any caste Hindu. And all this without the slightest pressure from anybody. What was quoted to me as the *Sankara Smriti* has given place to the Maharaja *Smriti* whose validity is proved by the unequivocal response of the caste Hindus as a whole and the equally unequivocal response in another sense by the Harijans. Truly, God is great, if we would but open the eyes of our understanding. My congratulations to the Maharaja and his good mother and his great Diwan, as also the Hindus of Travancore. Let us hope that all caste distinctions, in so far as they connote high and low grades, are things of the past in Travancore. If we garner the enthusiasm of Travancore, it cannot be long before the whole of India catches the Travancore spirit.

Harijan, 12-12-1936

146. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 12, 1936

MY DEAR ANAND,

I am sorry for Vijay's death and yet not quite so. He came to punish man and discharge his debt. His task having been finished the poor infant has gone. Let us shed a tear. My blessing was not available for the act.[1] It was and is ever available for you and Vidya. And if it means anything let it be a shield against repetition of the blunder. Your case has turned me upside down. Both of you have led me to bank so much upon you. I do not yet despair.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Hope Vidya is free from fever.

From a microfilm: Courtesy: National Archives of India and Anand T. Hingorani

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Anand T. Hingorani", p. 78.

147. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

December 12, 1936

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I am returning your letter. There is no doubt that you are mad. And you are as suspicious as you are mad. How you have completely misread my meaning in the letter. I wrote to you about Kanti and vexed yourself It becomes difficult even to help you. Neither Hindus nor Mussalmans despise you. Both like you. Your brothers love you. Then consider Thakkar Bapa, Malkani, Narandas, Prabhavati, Ba, Mira, Mahadev and the rest. To Kanti you are a mother. There was a time when Kanti could not live without you. Now he has got over that infatuation but he still worships you. Is there anything which Dr. Ansari has not done for you? Khan Saheb is always thinking about you. He even hoped that you would spend Ramzan with him. Your sister-in-law worships you. Your brothers love you. What more do you expect? There are very few as fortunate as you. A person like Khurshedbehn fawns upon you and Madam Wadia is eager to help you. If you wake up and look you will realize that you are mad and therefore unhappy. I will leave on the 19th. If you wish you can come and see me before that. But how will the meeting help you? If you want to get treated here, I can definitely make the arrangement. In that case you can't keep running from place to place and will have to live as I say, eat what I prescribe and do what I ask you to do.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 367

148. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

December 12, 1936

CHI. NARANDAS,

Now that I have something like leisure I am writing to you.

You have raised the question as to who can stay in the weavers' quarters in the Harijan Ashram. I like your suggestion.

Discuss the matter with Narahari. If you have any difference of opinion, let me know. This will save my time.

Vajubhai[1] went as he came. He could not satisfy me and I could not satisfy him. I told him that you did everything after consulting me and with my consent and that therefore if he had any differences of opinion with you he should discuss them with me. After this there was nothing for him but to argue with me. Then I learnt that there was a great gulf between his views and mine. Ultimately he left. I gave him the return fare. He had said that in order to get justice he might resort to satyagraha, that is, undertake a fast. Of course I explained to him the impropriety and the immorality of such a step. Let me know if he does anything or says anything. I am hoping that he will be quiet now and find some other work.

I understand about Keshu. I have always held your opinion in high esteem and therefore I will have to consider the whole episode again. I went through the letters of Lakshmidas, but I was not impressed by them as you were. The reason may be that I was not able to read them carefully. Now I will do so. Write to me if you can throw more light on the subject.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]
It seems that Kumi and Bali are having a tough time. Look after them.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8513. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

149. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

December 12, 1936

CHI. PREMA,

I have managed to snatch a little time to write this. You must not leave Saswad even if you have to live under a tree.[2] But give them no cause even in your thoughts. If you nurse anger even in your heart, you will lose the merit or reward of living under a tree.

[1] Vajubhai Shukla

[2] In Saswad the addressee had to give up the house which she had been able to secure for her ashram because of manoeuvring by the Mamlatdar.

We may have such decoration at the Congress as we can plan in keeping with the rural environment. Understand "as we can plan" in both the senses—that there should be art in decoration and that it should not cost a single pie.

I shall be going there on the 20th. How many we shall be will depend on the reply that we get from there.

You seem to be entertaining Vinoba very well.

See that you do not fall ill again. If one works within one's limits, one can do more work and the work shines out.

Lilavati's brother is seriously ill and so she has gone to Vile Parle.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10387. Also C.W. 6826. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

150. LETTER TO S. AMBUJAMMAL

December 12, 1936

CHI. AMBUJAM,

I am very happy that Tulsidas's *Ramayana* is being translated into Tamil by you. Your noble effort will enable the Tamil-knowing people to have the benefit of the unrivalled *prasadi* of Tulsidas.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: Ambujammal Papers Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

151. NEED FOR CLEANSING OF HEART

One of the two Harijan workers about whose downfall I have been writing[1] is Shri Ramnarayan Pathak, who was the soul of the Porbundar Chhaya Harijan Ashram. I had some talk and some correspondence with him. He has now written me the following letter:[2]

[1] *Vide* pp. 10-1 and 90-2.

[2] Not translated here The correspondent, anxious to atone for his misdemeanour, had requested Gandhiji to prepare a confession on his behalf and if he so chose to publish it in *Harijanbandhu.*

The letter of December 3 is really long. I have not summarized it. It is not easy to do so. Even if I published the whole letter it could possibly serve no useful purpose. I believe it is harmful to satisfy a morbid curiosity which seeks pleasure in finding faults with others. I do not therefore wish to put unnecessary details before the readers. Some persons calling themselves friends and well-wishers of Shri Ramnarayan have gently chided me. This was out of place as I had not given the name or address. What I had written was not written without thought or cause. However, what Shri Ramnarayan, unable to bear the burden of his guilt, has confessed is far more serious than I had realized.

I do not repent the habit I have formed since many years of not hiding my own faults or of those dear to me. This has only been to the good of the persons concerned and others. I have not concealed the failings of my late father, nor those of my wife, nor those of my sons. My own failings every reader knows by heart. Lest I forget, people, some in good faith, some others to condemn me, keep on reminding me of them. By making my failings public I have learnt to avoid them. However hard anyone may try secretly to be pure, he will never succeed. Why should God's creation not see the faults which God sees? Anyone who is really ashamed of his failings will be safe only by making them public and having his own co-workers to protect him. This is what is meant by depending on God. I must confess that many a time if I have saved myself from a heinous deed it was because of my friends and children. If I gave in to weakness what would happen to them? If they came to know of it in the case of a man to whom they looked for support, the support would collapse. This reflection saved me. This is what is called God's protection. This is what is meant by Rama being the strength of the weak. We can escape from the net spread by the senses only if we admit our failings. It is for this very reason that making public our faults is the first step towards purification.

Bhai Ramnarayan was already well established in the field of social service when I came to know him. Even at that first meeting, I did not see frankness or innocence in his eyes or on his face. But Thakkar Bapa had recommended him so strongly that disregarding the impression he had made on me I gave him my blessings. After that, however, I too like Thakkar Bapa became an admirer of Shri Ramnarayan. When I wanted to give an instance of an ideal Harijan worker I often cited the

name of Shri Ramnarayan. Just as I regard many young men and women as my sons and daughters, even so did I regard Shri Ramnarayan as my son. As for Narmada, she may be said to have come to me while still an infant. I became her father and also her mother, as she needed a mother's affection as well.

So the readers can well imagine the blow which I suffered. They will also understand the purpose of this article. The hopes which I had entertained about Narmada have now been blown away within a fraction of a second like a particle of dust in the wind.

When the first complaint against Ramnarayan reached me, my heart would not let me to believe it. I smelt Kathiawari rivalry in these. I, therefore, sent those letters for verification. I was showered with evidence. Much of the twofold sin which Shri Ramnarayan had been concealing for a long time came to light and he left Chhaya, along with Narmada.

Narmada is still a child. I still consider her to be innocent. She has a kind of courage, but lacks determination. I do not think she is one who would deliberately commit a sin. That girl became the victim of Shri Ramnarayan's lust. Although she strove with him she fell. Now both of them have married. Another girl who was also involved with him at the same time is left in the lurch.

In giving this account my aim is not to dwell on Shri Ramnarayan's failings. I believe that he has done all this because he was blinded by lust. It could not possibly have happened without the practice of falsehood, and so the thing continued undetected. But seldom can one hide one's guilt till the very end. Those whose failings come to light, should be regarded as blessed. This is precisely what has happened in the case of Shri Ramnarayan.

He is right in saying that he will be unable to purify himself even by the most candid confession. He has fallen so deep into the pit of lust that he has become almost incapable of coming out of it. Marriage gives a kind of outward peace. Indulgence assumes a new and fuller form. I know that those who hold modern views regarding the relationship between man and woman will not like this language. However, nothing is written in this journal with a view to pleasing anyone. I on my part do not have this aim in writing. I would be happy if I could please everyone while keeping *Satyanarayana*[1] with me. However, even if I cannot do so, I would not write anything which *Satyanarayana* would not tolerate. I do know what Bhai Ramnarayan's views are at the moment. According to his letter of December

[1] "Truth as God"

3, Shri Ramnarayan does not regard his marriage with Narmada as something improper. However, his letter which I have published suggests that he is restless in his mind, he cannot see his way clearly.

I believe that his mental agitation is sincere. Narmada is not his *sahadharmini*[1]. Where there is no dharma, how can there be anyone to share it? She is truly a helpless woman. It is only by guiding her and by making her dreams of service come true that he can serve her and atone for the wrongs done to her. Shri Ramnarayan can also fulfil his dharma of doing justice to the other girl by shedding impurity from his heart. And what about the debt to the Harijans? My heart fills with pain when I think of this. What a wide gap between Ramnarayan, the mature servant of Harijans and Ramnarayan the slave to sexual desire!

However, many slaves of this kind have attained liberation through sustained effort. Many have extricated themselves from the pit of sins. What alligator had caught the king of elephants? The latter was not a four-footed elephant with a trunk. He was a human being with two feet, like any one of us. The elephant was getting more and more entangled because of his own strength. But when his strength failed him, God came to his rescue and liberated him. The *Gajendramoksha* is not merely a poem. For those like us it is a consolation, it is a protecting hedge.

Those readers who, on reading this article, condemn Ramnarayan will not gain anything. All readers should pray for his purity, but even more important than this is that keeping this incident in mind, they should ever remain vigilant, should never conceal a weakness, should never entertain pride and think that if ever they should be in a similar predicament they would not get caught in the net. Pride has never helped anyone. He alone is triumphant whose heart is in the right place till the very end.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 13-12-1936

[1] Wife; literally, 'partner in dharma'

152. LETTER TO SARASWATI

December 8/13[1], *1936*

CHI. SARASWATI,[2]

I don't mind your failure at all. It is a stepping-stone to success. . . .[3] being thorough in the subjects you have failed in. There is no harm in your not being considered clever or brilliant. But there is much harm in not being and in not being considered good Do write regularly. . . .

BAPU

[PS.]

Poor Minakshi. Do send her my condolences. What was the matter with her father and what was his age?

BAPU

[PPS.]

In order to write more this was delayed up to today.

From a photostat G N 6157. Also C W 3430 Courtesy Kantilal Gandhi

153. LETTER TO N. R. MALKANI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 13, 1936

MY DEAR MALKANI,

I have your letter. Yes, I do study your figures I write nothing, as I have nothing to complain about.

I did remark about Tyagiji and asked V. Hari to speak to you about him. His goodness is undoubted. But he is lazy and lives in dreamland. Why does he need Rs.15 when he gets food and lodging? He used to ask for nothing at the Ashram. He has no needs. His son is working. Rajkishori is well able to support herself. I do not want you to get rid of him but he must not get more than his needs and even then

[1] The PPS. was added on December 13.

[2] This is in Devnagari.

[3]&[4] The source is damaged here,

not more than his market price. I fear he is getting more. If you like I shall write to him. I did write to him about his work.

As for yourself, I see nothing wrong in your getting something from *Hindustan Times*.

I agree with you about manufacturing our own *mistris*[1]. The sooner you do so the better. It is a tragedy that Tyagi won't be one. I note you are coming to the Congress.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 925

154. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

December 13, 1936

CHI. KANTI,

It was good I got your letter. I had a talk with Manu immediately. Now I will ascertain[2] Surendra's wishes and make arrangements accordingly. I have already written about milk.

I do get news about your health from time to time. I do not write to you because I do not get the time. I will not have you get old so soon. You cannot neglect your health. You must order your diet scientifically. Why worry about studies? Do as much as you can and be satisfied with it. Why should you be in a hurry? Do you want to gain true knowledge or show off? Whatever it may be, do not have the desire to get a "double first" at the cost of your health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7310. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

[1] Masons or carpenters
[2] *Vide* the following item

155. LETTER TO SURENDRA B. MASHRUWALA

December 13, 1936

CHI. SURENDRA[1],

Manu writes to you regularly, so I do not write. I write today because of two things Kanti has mentioned in his letter. You do not take milk and you have become somewhat impatient to get married. I do not say that the two things are related. You should never give up milk. The reason given by Kishorelal is also not correct. For one who is having discharges the thing required is purity of mind and, as external remedy, the hip-bath. When do you wish to get married? As Kanti understands it, you think the sooner it is the better. Let me know your wishes frankly. I can then consult the other elders and do what is proper. Where would you prefer to have the wedding solemnized, at Wardha only or would Segaon also do? Write to me without hesitation.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 1562. Courtesy Manubehn S. Mashruwala

156. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

December 14, 1936

DEAR KU,

Have not seen the Home Member's statement[2]. Unlucky Guntur!

Yes, have the meeting on the dates mentioned. I was told the opening was on 23rd. But don't know.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N 10112

[1] Kishorelal Mashruwala's nephew and Balubhai Mashruwala's son

[2] Regarding cyclone damage According to the Home Member the houses were rebuilt and the relief organizations were doing good work.

157. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

SEGAON,
December 14, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

We failed to receive the butter once again. Please ask them to send two days' supply with Ganapat.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I am sending a letter also.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S N 11508

158. LETTER TO KASTURBHAI LALBHAI

December 14, 1936

BHAI KASTURBHAI,

I have prepared a reply to your telegram. It will be despatched tomorrow. It is now 8.30 p.m. If after reading what you have to say I feel so inclined, I will certainly revise my views. If I find the need of discussion, I will give you trouble.

I on my part have not showed my draft to anyone connected with the Labour Association. I thought I might acquaint Shankerlal with it after we had given our Awards. Whether that happens or not, I quite agree with you that if we have to go to the Umpire neither of the parties should divulge anything about our decision till the Award is made public. Please write and inform the parties concerned on behalf of both of us from there.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[PS.]

I will reach Faizpur on the 20th. My stay there will last at least for nine days. However, if you find it necessary you can meet me there. On my part I do hope that by that time we shall be free of the work.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4197

159. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 15, 1936

MY DEAR IDIOT,

How idiotic of you to disappoint me at the last moment. But it is good. Duty before everything else. To pass through Wardha was no part of duty. It was a pleasure to be derived in the course of due performance of duty.

From what you say it seems that the two cotton quilts are also for me, not for the Exhibition. When J. comes he shall have the *fulkaris*.

Yes, I know Natesan very well. I can certainly write to him. But I would like you to tackle him once more. Let me know the result. I shall try if you fail.

Your account of the Manga[n]wal visit with Agatha is interesting. But you must not get tired. Why strain yourself? You won't acquire merit by overstraining or even straining yourself. Why not be satisfied with the use of energy God has given? Overuse is as much abuse as wrong use or underuse. Does this penetrate your idiotic brain? If it does, why not act accordingly?

I leave here on 19th for Faizpur. They are pressing me to go to Travancore to follow up the temple-entry.

Love.

ROBBER

[PS.]

It seems now certain that I must go to Travancore during first week of January. Of this we must talk when we meet.

From the original: C.W. 3760. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6916

160. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

December 15, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

I am sending herewith quite a big lot—Gujarati articles, one article[1] about Govind's letter, another about Mysore, a telegram for Kasturbhai and the mail.

I understand about butter. If Dharmadhikari is there he should come and see me, otherwise anyone who is there.

You may send with the bearer whatever little you wish to. Ganapat will of course come at noon.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N 11509

161. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

December 15, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

Ramachandran has become impatient. It is necessary to consult you before sending him a wire. I am in need of an annual diary for noting down appointments. Haven't you received any? I also want a wall calendar. This was a digression. I would certainly like to solve the Trivandrum problem quickly if no date has been given to anyone. Guide me. We shall reply tomorrow.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11513

[1] *Vide* "A Painful Duty", 19-12-1936.

162. *FRAGMENT OF A LETTER*[1]

December 15, 1936

When our speech and actions strive faithfully to follow our thoughts, our speech cannot fully describe those thoughts nor is the meaning of our actions fully conveyed by our words. When I describe in words a table of my conception the description falls short of the conception and, when it is made, the product falls short of the description. Euclid's straight line exists only in conception. Its definition is only a part of the conception and its figure again a part of the definition. If this cannot explain what I want to say, you can delete the bracketed portion without fear of break in the continuity of thought.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11559

163. *TELEGRAM TO AMTUSSALAAM*

WARDHAGANJ,
December 16, 1936

AMTUL SALAAM
EASTER VILLA, SANTA CRUZ

UNDESIRABLE COME FAIZPUR. NEVERTHELESS DECIDE FOR YOURSELF.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 365

[1] The addressee is not identified in the source.

164. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

December 16, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

I have gone through your preface. It is no doubt good. No changes are called for. I have therefore made very few. Whether the reader will be able to digest it is a question. Let us however leave it at that.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I have sent three articles, not including one[1] by Andrews. I sit down now to write the Gujarati.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N 11510

165. LETTER TO MOOLCHAND AGRAWAL

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 16, 1936

BHAI MOOLCHAND,

I am replying to your letter after a long time. I am enquiring into the matter instead of writing about it in *Harijan*. Please let me have the names and addresses of the prominent workers of the Arya Samaj in Ajmer.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N 759

[1] "A Message of Peace", published in *Harijan*, 26-12-1936

166 *INTERVIEW TO MISS FITCH*[1]

[*December 16, 1936*][2]

The chief value of Hinduism lies in holding the actual belief that *all* life (not only human beings, but all sentient beings) is one, i.e., all life coming from the One universal source, call it Allah, God or Parameshwara. There is in Hinduism a scripture called *Vishnusahasranama* which simply means 'one thousand names of God'. These one thousand names do not mean that God is limited to those names, but that He has as many names as you can possibly give Him. You may give Him as many names as you like provided it is one God without a second, whose name you are invoking. That also means that He is nameless too.

This unity of *all* life is a peculiarity of Hinduism which confines salvation not to human beings alone but says that it is possible for all God's creatures. It may be that it is not possible, save through the human form, but that does not make man the Lord of creation. It makes him the servant of God's creation. Now when we talk of brotherhood of man, we stop there, and feel that all other life is there for man to exploit for his own purposes. But Hinduism excludes all exploitation. There is no limit whatsoever to the measure of sacrifice that one may make in order to realize this oneness with all life, but certainly the immensity of the ideal sets a limit to your wants. That, you will see, is the antithesis of the position of the modern civilization which says: 'Increase your wants.' Those who hold that belief think that increase of wants means an increase of knowledge whereby you understand the Infinite better. On the contrary Hinduism rules out indulgence and multiplication of wants as these hamper one's growth to the ultimate identity with the Universal Self.

Harijan, 26-12-1936

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter" The interviewer had asked Gandhiji to tell her the chief values of Hinduism as she had been told that he was the life and soul of Hinduism

[2] The name and the date are supplied from the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary.

167. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 18, 1936

MY DEAR IDIOT,

So you will receive this in Ahmedabad. You will go to the Harijan Ashram and speak to the girls, the cattle and the trees of which there was not a trace when I took the land. There was a solitary *neem* tree, I think. You will see old Ramji, the Harijan, and his tall wife. And you will see also some familiar faces. Anandi, I think you know. And you must see the Vidyapith and the labour work of Anasuyabai. You should see her indigenous kindergarten for the Harijan brats. Of course you will see Mridula's Jyoti Sangh. The other things will be shown to you in the usual manner.

Don't bury yourself in the routine work, though that can't be neglected, I know. But you *must* learn the art of doing things without fretting and feeling the strain.

What a long-drawn-out sermon this letter has become? You will be quite comfortable with me in Faizpur. Only don't come there in a dilapidated condition.

You have all the love you may be in need of there from

TYRANT

[PS.]

I reach Faizpur on 20th.

From the original: C.W. 3761. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6917

168. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

December 18, 1936

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I have received your telegram. Why do you insist on coming to Faizpur? Come to see me at Segaon and talk to me there. You may stay on if you like the place. Why do you have misgivings when I have already told you that I shall keep you

in Segaon? In spite of all this if you want to come to Faizpur do come. I expect to be back in Segaon on the 29th.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G.N 366

169. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

December 18, 1936

CHI. LILA,

I have your letter. Why do you worry? Worrying will not help you to lessen your brother's suffering. Why should you worry? Death, life and recovery from illness depend on God alone. It is our dharma to live, to get well or to make an effort in that direction, and we have to discharge it. Why should you worry while discharging your dharma? Know for certain that worry is an obstacle in the path of dharma. Take it that prayers, *bhajans*, and so on are useless if they do not teach us to remain unperturbed under all circumstances.

Why can't you call Dinshaw to the hospital? Seek the doctor's permission. He will give it. Take his permission for the treatment also. At least meet Dinshaw. Talk to him, get the necessary information, find out his visiting days. We should build the dam before the floods. We should not start digging a well when the house catches fire; we should have one ready beforehand.

Do not create unnecessary trouble. Do not talk loudly. Give thought to whatever you do. Do not blurt out whatever comes to your mind. Put up with what you cannot help.

I hope that Damayanti has patience and courage.

You have not given the name of the hospital.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9352. Also C.W. 6627. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

170. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

December 18, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

Babla's handwriting, one can say, has improved. But he has forgotten quite a lot of what he had learnt. I hope you have received and despatched the telegram to Kasturbhai. I have received a fair number of copies of *Ishopanishad*.

I expect to reach there at about 7.30 tomorrow. Navin will come with Ba. So for the present three of us and Mehrtaj will go. Bablo will join us on the 23rd.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11511

171. LETTER TO NANABHAI I. MASHRUWALA

December 18, 1936

BHAI NANABHAI[1],

I am glad you wrote me the two letters. You should not have any hesitation in writing to me.

About the first letter, Kishorelal has taken the responsibility.

Now about the second letter. I feel that it is right that we should know even our seniors as they are. It has been my experience that since we do not know many of them, we form an exaggerated opinion of them, and as a result the significance of *brahmacharya* is undermined. The idea of *brahmacharya* will lose its lustre if people consider me a *brahmachari* since childhood. A man who is pure of mind, speech, body and temper has a lustre all his own. Where can we find such *brahmacharis* these days? The influence of our seniors does not suffer if we know them as they are, but if they conceal their shortcomings the impression they make on us will only be superficial.

The question of self-control does not arise as I am against artificial means of birth-control. However, I quite agree with

[1] Kishorelal Mashruwala's brother

your view that even if that knowledge is worth acquiring it should be disseminated in a restrained manner.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the friendship between men and women should not exceed a limit. Of course it is difficult to draw a line. Moreover, such a limit cannot be universal and absolute. I hope you are keeping well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7529. Also C.W. 5005. Courtesy: Kanubhai N. Mashruwala

172. LETTER TO TARABEHN N. MASHRUWALA

December 18, 1936

CHI. TARI,

I feel like writing: 'How shall I make you understand?' Will you wake up only when your condition becomes utterly hopeless? To improve your health you should make up your mind to get well at least to the extent of two annas in a rupee. Why do you lose hope? If you are giving much help there, then do stay on. I will not say anything.

Tell Nanabhai that Kishorelal has taken the responsibility of dealing with his long letter, so I have not written anything to him.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI TARABEHN MASHRUWALA
AKOLA
BERAR

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6699

173. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

December 18, 1936

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I am glad that you liked my article this time. But the fact is that I can write only what I feel and that is as it should be.

As soon as I received Ramachandran's telegram from Travancore I felt it was my duty to go. Why not see Sir Akbar, too, as

you saw the Travancore authorities? Why should we not discuss with the Viceroy and other officials the need for a law? Maybe a law is necessary to open the Guruvayur temple. What is needed is for someone to offer the advice. Will not Malaviyaji agree even now?

I completely forgot about Parnerkar. I shall try to send him. I leave tomorrow for Faizpur. Parnerkar is there. I shall write to you further after seeing him.

I have accepted your opinion regarding Parameshwari for I have nothing definite to suggest. I do have a feeling, though, that Parameshwari might be allowed to conduct his experiment by turning the present company into a public association. I think his idea of improving the breed is not ill-founded and he is interested in the work. He has also obtained favourable opinions of the other experts. My bias is certainly in his favour but how can I be certain? I know him only through you people. I do not therefore wish to do anything independently.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 8027. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

174. A PAINFUL DUTY

I publish the following without any alteration:[1]

An open letter to Mahatma Gandhi:

DEAR MAHATMAJI,

I was shocked to read your note[2] about myself in the *Harijan* of 21-11-1936 which contains untrue statements about me. I am not "carrying on Harijan work near Cuttack" nor did I "come down to Bombay to make the usual collections" nor "as a rule, I consult you before going out for collections."

I make the following statements in repudiation and correction of your statement which appeared in *Harijan* of 21-11-1936. Though I was at one time at Sabarmati Ashram, never received any help from you nor any mandate to carry on Harijan work or any other work near Cuttack or anywhere else. I have not been carrying on Harijan work near Cuttack. I never consulted you before going out for collection for Sevashram started by me and

[1] Only extracts are reproduced here.
[2] *Vide* "Beware of Beggars", p. 63.

named by me in your honour. It has no connection with or dependence on any Congress institution nor with you. On my return from Sabarmati in the year 1921, I had an idea of serving the country on the line which you were preaching . . .

When some complaints reached you 18 months ago, you wrote to me and I gave you a suitable reply, solemnly negativing the allegations. There the duty which I owe to you has ended as far as I and my Ashram are concerned You are free to make any investigation you like . . .

I remain,
Yours truly,
Dated Cuttack, GOVIND CHANDRA MISRA
the 6th Dec 1936

I would have suppressed the letter if the author had not invited publicity. To publish it is a painful task, to comment on it a painful duty.

Govind Babu first came to me sent by Deenabandhu Andrews when he was in the greatest need. He was not wanted in Orissa. My weakness for Orissa compelled me to keep him in Sabarmati. His incoherent conversation did not prepossess me in his favour. And but for his being from Orissa and his description of his sufferings I would not have harboured him in spite of Deenabandhu's recommendation. Like everyone else he straightway became like my sons. Indeed his manners were so unattractive that the other inmates did not take to him kindly. So he was my extra care. He went to Orissa after consultation with me. He opened the Ashram in consultation with me. He used to send his reports regularly to me. He did do Harijan work and khadi work under my supervision. He collected monies in Bombay principally from those who know me and him as an inmate of Sabarmati. I went out of my way to visit his Ashram. On going there I was deeply pained to see the bungalow he had built there and publicly condemned it. He pleaded guilty. The only work worth naming that I saw being done was a well-stocked dispensary which was kept in a slovenly condition. I rebuked him severely for belying my hopes, for absence of proper accounts and any constructive work. The dispensary was certainly not a need. I told him it was the easiest thing for anybody to establish if he got some funds.

He had promised to mend but he did not. Then Baba Raghavdas was sent to inquire into the working and his report was adverse. Then came grave allegations about his morals. These are still under investigation. I knew nothing about his being a

candidate for the Assembly. He never consulted me about it. He knew that I would disapprove of the step for him. It was only after the paragraph about him had appeared that he felt compelled to disclose the secret to me. His first letter was suppression of truth, the second an admission. After the paragraph was published he offered to come to Segaon to clear himself. I had a number of declarations from his erstwhile friends making most damaging statements. I therefore accepted his offer. But he backed out of it saying he no longer subscribed to my philosophy. In the light of this honest outline of my connection with Govind Babu, I can only say that his letter is a gross perversion of truth. It has been no pleasure to me to have to write a word against one in whose making I had a great deal to do and who was at one time ready to do as I would like him to.

The only relieving feature in this episode is that Govind Babu is so hysterical that he often does not know what he is speaking or that he is speaking an untruth. May he detect in this writing the anguish of a parent who has suddenly lost an obedient son and repent of the wound he has inflicted on me. In spite of all his limitations I had never doubted his loyalty and readiness to carry out my wishes in the interest of the cause which bound him to me. His two recent letters and this last have come upon me as a thunderbolt.

Harijan, 19-12-1936

175. A CONTRAST

Thakkar Bapa sends me the following four cases from Gwalior:

> (1) In the diary for October last, Sjt. K. V. Datey, the chief Harijan worker of Gwalior State, reports that there was a great commotion amongst the audience in a public meeting held in the Town-Hall at Ujjain where Jain Guru Anantsagar was speaking to an audience of about five to six hundred people, because some Harijans entered the hall to hear the religious sermon. The orthodox section amongst the audience wanted the Harijans to go out, but the speaker and the reformists were firm, with the result that the orthodox section went away displeased.
>
> (2) At the end of October the Suba or the Collector of Ujjain issued an order that Harijan sevaks, even of 'high caste', were thereafter prohibited from worshipping in the chief temple of Ujjain,

because of their close contact with Harijans. Necessary representation has been made to the State in connection with this order.

(3) A Chamar girl in a village named Mahudia had the audacity to put a golden ring on one of her ears. This was resented by some orthodox people who had it removed. This came to the notice of one of the workers who went to the village and had them reconciled and the girl was allowed to put the ring on her ear.

(4) The mother of Shri Moolchand Agrawal, a khadi worker, died on 27th October at Neemuch. Sjt. Dhaniram Sagar, a Harijan and a worker, joined the funeral procession and carried the bier for a short distance out of respect for the deceased. The orthodox amongst the funeral party resented this very much, but Sjt. Moolchand remained firm and so the matter did not go further.

What a contrast with what is going on in Travancore! The present Maharaja of Gwalior has only just mounted the gadi. He made a generous statement about the Harijans. If he follows it up by action such as Travancore's, his Subas won't issue the ridiculous orders such as the Suba of Ujjain is reported to have done, nor will caste Hindus molest Harijans as they have done according to Thakkar Bapa's report. The bulk of the caste Hindus are torn between two conflicting opinions.

In the Indian States, the thing appears to be simple. If the other Hindu princes like Travancore will issue authoritative proclamations, they will have the validity of *Smritis* and all opposition will be silenced.

Harijan, 19-12-1936

176. WHAT IS A MIRACLE?

About the 9th of October last there was a meeting of Christian denominations in London. His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury presided. The following occurs in the report of the meeting published in the *Church Times* of 16th October:

> The next speaker was dressed as a layman, without even the smallest discernible purple patch to indicate that he was Dr. J. W. Pickett, a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, U.S.A. For some years past, Dr. Pickett has been studying the mass movements on the spot in India, and has published the results of his observations in *Christian Mass Movements in India*, described by the Archbishop of Canterbury as a remarkable and valuable book. Dr. Pickett is profoundly impressed

> with the spiritual significance of the movement He said that four and a half millions of the depressed classes in India have become the disciples of our Lord, and the witness they bear to Him in their lives is making the multitudes in India marvel. Even Brahmins have testified—albeit reluctantly—to the power of Christianity to transform the characters and lives of people whom they once thought incapable of religious feelings, and to whom they denied the right of entrance to the temples of Hinduism. It is people of this kind, said Dr. Pickett, who have now standards of church attendance and worship difficult to equal in Western Christendom. He quoted an example in the Telugu area, where 900,000 people now profess the Christian faith. Out of 1,026 villages, 1,002 hold a service for the worship of God every evening of the year, and more than two hundred also a daily morning service. It appeared to satisfy Dr. Pickett entirely as a test of the reality of the faith of the converts to hear a surprisingly high proportion of them speak of a sense of mystical union with God and their belief that God had come into their lives. Even their Hindu neighbours admitted that the religion of Jesus Christ had lifted them to a new standard of cleanliness of person and home, and made them a trustworthy people. More impressive still is the fact that high-caste people are now coming into the church, literally by dozens and hundreds, in areas where this transformation of life has occurred among the untouchables. "It is a miracle," he declared, "one of the great miracles of Christian history."

I have rarely seen so much exaggeration in so little space. A reader ignorant of conditions in India would conclude that the figures relate to the conversions due to the movement led by Dr. Ambedkar. I am sure Dr. Pickett could not have made any such claim. He has in mind the figures to date commencing from the establishment of the first church in India hundreds of years ago. But the figures are irrelevant to the general claim said to have been advanced by the Bishop. Where are "the multitudes in India who marvel" at the transformation in the lives of "four and a half millions of the depressed classes"? I am one of the multitudes having practically travelled more than half a dozen times all over India, and have not seen any transformation on the scale described by Dr. Pickett, and certainly none of recent date. I have had the privilege of addressing meetings of Indian Christians who have appeared to me to be no better than their fellows. Indeed the taint of untouchability persists in spite of the nominal change of faith so far as the social status is concerned. Needless to say I am referring to the masses, not individuals. I should like to know the Brahmins "who have

testified—albeit reluctantly—to the power of Christianity to transform the characters and lives of people whom they once thought incapable of religious feeling." But if it is of any consequence, I can show many Brahmins who can testify to the power of the reform movement to make a radical change in the lives and outlook of Harijans who were neglected by caste Hindus. I must pass by the other unbelievable generalizations. But I should like to know the hundreds of high-caste Hindus who "are now coming into the church in areas where this transformation of life has occurred among the untouchables." If all the astounding statements Dr. Pickett has propounded can be substantiated, truly it is "one of the great miracles of Christian history", nay, of the history of man.

But do miracles need an oratorical demonstration? Should we in India miss such a grand miracle? Should we remain untouched by it? Miracles are their own demonstration. As witness the miracle in Travancore. Nobody believed a month ago that the more than 2,000 temples of Travancore could be opened to Harijans and that Harijans would enter them in their hundreds without let or hindrance from the most orthodox Hindus. Yet that event has happened in Travancore which even he who runs may see. It is beside the point whether it can be called a miracle or not. I see in it the visible finger of the Invisible God.

I believe in the Bible as I believe in the *Gita*. I regard all the great faiths of the world as equally true with my own. It hurts me to see any one of them caricatured as they are today by their own followers and as has been done by the learned Bishop, assuming of course that the report reproduced above is substantially correct.

Harijan, 19-12-1936

177. *WHAT IS NON-VIOLENCE?*

A friend[1] writes.

> You enjoin on all your disciples to be non-violent not only in *acts* but also in *words* and *thoughts* In the *Harijan* of Nov 26[2], you are reported to have said to Mr Andrews on his wanting to know from you your reaction to the present attitude of the missionaries, "Their behaviour has been as bad as that of the rest who are in the field to add to their numbers. What pains one is their frantic attempt to

[1] A. S. Wadia, *vide* "What Is Non-violence?", 6-2-1937.

[2] This should be 28.

exploit the weakness of Harijans. If they said, 'Hinduism is a diabolical religion and you come to us,' I should understand But they dangle earthly paradises in front of them and make promises to them which they can never keep "[1]

If you are reported correctly, I ask—is this not *violence in words* against the missionaries as a class?

I have no disciples, being myself an aspirant after discipleship and in search of a guru. But that is irrelevant to the issue raised by my friend. To say or write a distasteful word is surely not violence, especially when the speaker or writer believes it to be true as I did when I spoke to Deenabandhu as reported in the quotation. But even if it were found that what I said was an exaggeration, or worse still, an untruth, it would not be violent in the sense used by my correspondent. The essence of violence is that there must be a violent intention behind a thought, word, or act, i.e., an intention to do harm to the opponent so called. Here there was and could be no such intention. I was engaged in a friendly conversation with two good Christians, both missionaries in their own way.

I have used much stronger language about sanatanist behaviour towards Harijans and quite latterly about the acts of dear co-workers. But there has been no violent intention behind the use of my language. And generally I have been acquitted by my critics of any violent intention.

Indeed the acid test of non-violence is that one thinks, speaks and acts non-violently, even when there is the gravest provocation to be violent. There is no merit in being non-violent to the good and the gentle. Non-violence is the mightiest force in the world capable of resisting the greatest imaginable temptation. Jesus knew 'the generation of vipers', minced no words in describing them, but pleaded for mercy for them before the Judgment Throne, 'for they knew not what they were doing.'

I gave the company chapter and verse in support of the statements I made. I regard myself as a friend of the missionaries. I enjoy happy relations with many of them. But my friendships have never been blind to the limitations of my friends or the systems or methods they have supported.

False notions of propriety or fear of wounding susceptibilities often deter people from saying what they mean and ultimately land them on the shores of hypocrisy. But if non-violence of

[1] *Vide* "Discussion with C. F. Andrews", p. 18.

thought is to be evolved in individuals or societies or nations, truth has to be told, however harsh or unpopular it may appear to be for the moment. And mere non-violent action without the thought behind it is of little value. It can never be infectious. It is almost like a whited sepulchre. Thought is the power and the life behind it. We hardly know that thought is infinitely greater than action or words. When there is correspondence between thought, word and deed, either is a limitation of the first. And the third is a limitation of the second. Needless to say that here I am referring to the living thought which awaits translation into speech and action. Thoughts without potency are airy nothings and end in smoke.

Harijan, 19-12-1936

178. HOW TO STOP OBSCENE ADVERTISEMENTS[1]

A correspondent who saw my article[2] on obscene advertisements writes:

> You can do much in preventing obscene advertisements by exposing the names of the papers and magazines which advertise such shameless things as you have mentioned

I can't undertake the censorship my correspondent advises, but I can suggest a better way. If public conscience is alive, subscribers can write to their respective papers, if they contain objectionable advertisements, drawing their attention to them and stopping their subscriptions if the offence is not cured. The reader will be glad to know that the sister who complained to me about the obscene advertisement wrote also to the editor of the offending magazine who expressed his regret for the inadvertent admission of the obnoxious advertisement and promised to remove it forthwith.

I am glad also to be able to say that my caution has found support from some other papers. Thus the editor of *Nispruha* of Nagpur writes:

> I have not only read with great care your article in the *Harijan* regarding obscene advertisements but have given a detailed translation of it in the *Nispruha*. I have also added a short editorial comment thereon

[1] The Hindi version of this was published in *Harijan Sevak*, 19-12-1936.
[2] *Vide* pp. 29-30.

I am enclosing a typical advertisement which though not obscene is yet immoral in a sense. The advertisement is obviously bogus and it is generally the villager who falls a prey to it. I have always refused such advertisements and I am also writing to this party similarly If an editor must supervise the reading matter that he will allow, it is as much his duty to supervise the advertisements, and no editor can permit his paper to be used by people desirous of duping the simple villagers.

Harijan, 2-1-1937

179. *LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI*

December 19, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

As decided earlier, I am sending the letter herewith. The bearer's name is Mahadev. Give him whatever he is able to carry. Lilavati is of course coming there in a cart.

I want six pomegranates and 12 bananas.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11512

180. *WHAT SHOULD THOSE FAILING IN DUTY DO?*

Some friends have posed the question arising out of the sad incident which I have had to relate:[1] "You bring to light such cases, and suggest to the persons concerned to give up their posts. You have been unable to find fault with their work from the material point of view. You have even praised their work. Have they now lost their ability as well? Should the public be deprived of their services? Who is to fill the vacancies caused by their going?"

This question is worth considering. For myself I answered it years ago and on innumerable occasions I have acted accordingly. I have not used the adjective 'innumerable' thoughtlessly. I have acted on my belief so many times that I have lost count of them. I believe and I have repeatedly found in experience that however able a person may be, his secret immorality cannot but leave a stamp upon his work. This rule does have a limitation on its field of application, namely, that the type of work in question requires moral integrity. The work done by those who lack ability but are faultless in character, has shone out. There should be no need to give instances

[1] *Vide* "Need for Cleansing of Heart", pp. 129-32.

of this. Doing so is a delicate task. But if one looks at the activities which have been founded on morality, one cannot fail to be convinced by what I have said. There should be no hesitation in believing that the removal of untouchability is impossible with the help of men who lack character. How can even the best orator, well versed in the Shastras, change the beliefs of an orthodox sanatanist Hindu? Attacking the intellect is futile The influence of such persons as Chaitanya, Ramakrishna, Rammohan Roy, Dayanand and others, still persists today. Is this through any force? We may perhaps come across numerous persons more intelligent than they. But they will not be able to convert people's hearts. The history of the world is replete with such instances. Despite this, if we ask for proofs we will be justifying the saying that a bad dancer finds the courtyard uneven. However, it must be admitted that even a person of character must have industry, a keen desire for the necessary knowledge and discernment.

However, the question asked by the correspondent still remains unanswered. Those who have left public institutions do not and cannot give up service even if they want to. No one can take a person away from his dharma. Dharma belongs to him who practises it. Dharma is for those who are engaged in the service of Harijans, in khadi work, in serving the villages. If those who had fallen, but have come out of their swoon, will render service wherever they happen to be, who can prevent them from living in a village? Who can prevent them from silently doing scavenging in villages while living in obscurity? What is there to prevent them from spinning and teaching others to spin or in serving Harijans? While doing all this, they would purify themselves to such an extent that they would not find it difficult to face society. Even if they lived unnoticed wherever they are, the aura which they would create would spread far and wide. I have never said or believed that there is no redemption from sin. Even the first among the fallen can become a saint. A historian has said this of Tulsidas. The *Gita* proclaims that even for the very sinful the path of devotion leads to liberation. It is for this reason that one of the names of God is *Patitapavan*[1].

[From Gujarati]
Harijanbandhu, 20-12-1936

[1] Purifier of the fallen

181. THE IDEAL AND THE ACTUAL

A gentleman has written a long letter on reading my article[1] on the ideal Bhangi. The substance[2] of it is as follows:

The correspondent has embellished his letter with many arguments. There is nothing new in them. The letter merely attempts to convince me. Hence I shall not involve the reader in these arguments. I intend to make some observations in reply in order to make my stand clearer. An ideal which cannot be put into practice at all is not worth the name. There will always be a gulf between the ideal and the actual. Man's supreme effort should be directed towards bridging this gulf. Even today, we come across many Bhangis who are highly educated and who are carrying on their occupation and are striving to come up to my description of an ideal Bhangi. Their number is constantly increasing. If some of the carpenters remain carpenters all their lives, some of the farmers remain farmers, some stone-cutters and some barbers continue to follow their vocations, then why can't some of the Bhangis remain Bhangis? Do not all these persons have a right to knowledge? Actually every doctor and every nurse is a Bhangi. He or she has to handle human excreta, smell, clean and analyse it. Will it be humiliating to them if we regard them as Bhangis? Why should that be so? What sin has the Bhangi committed that his occupation is regarded as the lowliest of all? This is not the case everywhere in the world. Even in England some persons have to sweep the streets and carry away garbage. That occupation is not regarded as demeaning by anyone there.

Any vocation scientifically pursued is as interesting as any scientific pursuit. It is in our country that society has not allowed the vocations to grow into sciences by looking down upon them. Hence, the carpenter does not compile technical documents on carpentry. We import these from the West. At present Dr. Fowler is doing the work of a Bhangi in Bangalore. He collects

[1] *Vide* pp. 86-8.

[2] Not reproduced here. The correspondent had written to say that he disagreed with Gandhiji's views on the ideal Bhangi. He felt that Gandhiji could not differentiate between the ideal and the actual and he would not be successful in turning anyone into an ideal Bhangi.

all the garbage in the hotel where he stays and is minutely studying how to convert it into manure in the simplest way.

In the West the disposal of the garbage in the big cities is demanding work. Those who do it and devise new methods for doing it are also Bhangis, aren't they?

In Darjeeling and Simla, enormous sums are spent on the disposal of garbage. Is it not a matter of shame and sorrow that none among our Bhangi brothers have acquired any knowledge of this? This is a heinous sin on the part of those who are said to belong to the higher castes. Our looking down upon Bhangis, has made them the object of the disdain of the world. I have not the slightest doubt in my mind that there cannot be any happiness or independence, whether economic, social or political, in the country as long the Bhangis do not get the same respect as the Brahmins. What I have said here is not about ideals—but purely about what is practicable. I ask for respect for the Bhangi as he is today. When a Bhangi gains knowledge of the Brahman, we shall perforce worship him. But we shall become purified only when we recognize a Bhangi as our own brother even as he is.

[From Gujarati]
Harijanbandhu, 20-12-1936

182. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

December 20, 1936

CHI. A. SALAAM,

You have indeed started writing a good deal in Hindi. What is the use of sending a telegram to you? There is no limit to your foolishness. If you are not patient with the treatment, then please come to Segaon. I will give you the treatment I desire. I will reach Segaon on the 29th, or, at the latest, on the 31st.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 368

183. LETTER TO KASTURBHAI LALBHAI

FAIZPUR,
December 20, 1936

BHAI KASTURBHAI,

As per our talk I have carefully examined the papers which are to be submitted to the Umpire. I have removed all the papers connected with the three issues. I am sending herewith the list of the papers which will have to be sent to the Umpire. I have also appended to Nos. 2, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15 and 16 the latest replies from the Mill-owners' Association. The documents Nos. 10, 11 and 12 are independent notes submitted by the Labour Association. So far we have not received any reply from the Association. Those notes relate to the discussion held at Wardha. You will see that one of them is a corrigendum. As in the case of the other notes, the copy of this note has also been sent to the Association; so it has to be retained. However, I will not have any objection if you feel that all these three notes should be removed. As far as I am concerned, I have not gone into the merits and demerits of the case. So I do not require to note mistakes or the figures mentioned in the notes in order to arrive at a decision.

I have all the papers mentioned in the list ready in case we are fated to go to the Umpire. I have not made any notes, etc., on them, so that those can be sent to the Umpire. However, I do hope that you, independently or with the help of some lawyer friend, have been convinced of the three basic issues I have raised and will be taking effective steps in the direction we had thought of while arranging the papers. Naturally I had to read the papers again but I could do that only very casually. I feel that my decision is as clear as daylight. But that has no meaning. However, if, and only if, you reach the same conclusion, we can save ourselves from going to the Umpire.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4198

184. LETTER TO SHRIMANNARAYAN

December 20, 1936

CHI. SHRIMAN,

I have gone through your article. It cannot be published in *Harijan*, it is not worth publishing. Make your scheme public. Your resolution is acceptable to all but how are we to define 'literacy'? The question is very controversial.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]
Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 299

185. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

December 21, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

We did not have the rain you had but we had full-strength gale and lightning. Here there has been nothing so far. They are working full speed but much remains to be done yet. Nature has been unkind. Her unkindness will be forgotten if she does not repeat it.

It will be a great thing if Prahlad's boy pulls through. I am glad you will have half an hour with Balkoba every evening.

I have given strict instructions about fruit. I hope the two B.s[1] are getting it without any hitch.

Do not overwork.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Tilak Nagar P. O. No further address required.

[PPS.]

Have talked to P. He will write.

From the original: C.W. 6368. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9834

[1] Ba and Balkoba

186. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

TILAKNAGAR,
December 21, 1936

CHI. LILA,

How is it you have not received my letter? I was glad to learn that your brother is now recovering.

Tell Damayanti I had thought she was brave. A brave woman will not weep or be restless. Life and death are not in your hands, nor in the hands of anyone else. Why should one grieve then? We have done everything when we have served the sick.

Only Mahadev, Bablo, Pyarelal and Radhakishan are here with me. Of course Khan Saheb and Mehrtaj are here. They lodge separately. Mehr is with Prema.

Ba, Manu, Nimu's Kano and Navin will arrive on the 24th.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

This is enough for Mehr and Tara.

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G.N. 9353. Also C.W. 6628. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

187. LETTER TO HARILAL GANDHI

FAIZPUR CONGRESS,
December 21, 1936

CHI. HARILAL,

If you can give up drinking for eight months for my sake and for nine months for the sake of Vijayshankerji, then for how long will you do so for your own sake and for the sake of God?

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

From the Manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

188. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

December 21, 1936

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I hope your dairying and scavenging are going on well. Take a testimonial from Mirabehn. She knows this work well. Try to understand the dairy accounts in detail. The students will have come on Sunday.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8592. Also C.W. 7004. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

189. LETTER TO VIJAYA N. PATEL

TILAKNAGAR,
December 21, 1936

CHI. VIJAYA,

There is nothing particular to write to you. You write to me. Bring neatness into everything you do. Be exact in keeping accounts.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7062. Also C.W. 4554. Courtesy: Vijaya M. Pancholi

190. LETTER TO BALWANTSINHA

December 21, 1936

CHI. BALWANTSINHA,

I gave Ramdas your letter. He thought you might have come here since you had no work on hand. I told him about your having taken up service of the cow and he was silent. I hope you are keeping well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1888

191. ADDRESS TO CONGRESS VOLUNTEERS[1]

December 21, 1936

Mahatma Gandhi broke his silence tonight with an exhortation to the Congress volunteers, particularly those in charge of conservancy. About 500 men and women listened to him in cloistral silence.

Speaking in quiet persuasive tones, Gandhiji dwelt at length on what he described as the science of Bhangis' work. He started by pointing out that he had begun his work as a Bhangi long ago in South Africa. To be born as a 'Bhangi' was the result of great *punya* in previous birth. He did not know what qualifications determined the birth of one man as Bhangi and another as Brahmin, but from the point of view of benefit to society the one was no whit lower than the other. Those who considered Bhangis' work as mean did so in their ignorance.

Every mother acted as a Bhangi for her children; every doctor often acted as a Bhangi for his patients. But the doctors received fat fees, while the Bhangi who was equally working for the benefit of society got very little in comparison Society regarded the work of Bhangis as demeaning, while the wholesome work done by the doctors was considered ennobling. One who could not and did not do the work of the Bhangi in the proper spirit and in a thorough fashion and with pride in it could never be expected to do any other item of national service to the country effectively. The Congress could go on with its deliberations and win success only if sanitary work was carried out properly. Congress deliberations might end in success, but no session of the Congress could be called a success if the sanitary work was not a success. One could go without food for two or three days and could do so without serious trouble but no one could do without the Bhangi's services for that length of time or even less. The greatest cause of worry for those in charge of arrangements for Congress sessions was the anxiety to see that there was no complaint on the score of food and sanitary arrangements. Other things need not worry them so much.

Mahatma Gandhi proceeded to refer critically to the actual work he had seen some of the volunteers do. What struck him was that they were very slow. He did not blame them. It was not their fault. They were sincere, but there seemed to be none to attend to their training. With training he was confident that they would do splendidly. His conception

[1] This was also reported by *The Hindu*, *The Hindustan Times* and *The Hitavada*.

of *Ramarajya*, which, he said, was certain to come to India, was a dispensation under which there would be no distinction between a Brahmin and a Bhangi or even a Brahmin and a Maharaja. They would be treated from the point of view of the usefulness to society of their respective work. Re-emphasizing the importance of Bhangi in the scheme of things, Gandhiji declared that swaraj would come to India not through the Congress parliamentarians in the legislatures, but through efficient and conscientious discharge of their work by Bhangis and other workers without looking for reward or praise in municipal and public addresses He exhorted the workers as well as the delegates and visitors to Faizpur to make it an ideal village.

Passing on to the number of volunteers placed at his disposal, Gandhiji said that fifteen volunteers who accompanied him during his walks seemed to be too many. He would be satisfied if one volunteer came with him just to show him the way. Faizpur was a village, not a big city and there was no fear of big crowds requiring the attention of a large posse of volunteers

The Bombay Chronicle, 22-12-1936

192. TELEGRAM TO EZHAVA TEMPLE-ENTRY CELEBRATIONS COMMITTEE

[On or before *December 22, 1936*][1]

DO NOT BE IMPATIENT. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO COME BEFORE JANUARY 6TH. SEND ME A FIVE DAYS PROGRAMME AND MAKE ARRANGEMENTS.

The Bombay Chronicle, 23-12-1936

193. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

FAIZPUR,
December 22, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

Your letter.

Ba I expect on 24th. It is well I did not bring her with me. The fewer there are here to look after the better. If I could have, I [would] have prevented Ba from coming. But that was not possible.

[1] The report carrying the item bears the date December 22.

I do not mind how much work you do so long as you do not strain yourself.

I hope Prahlad's boy is on the mend and so also the new cow. It would be a pity to lose her.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6369. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9835

194. SPEECH AT KIRODA[1]

December 22, 1936

Gandhiji said how happy he was to come to the village. He regarded it as a pilgrimage, remembering as he did the sacrifices and services of Dhanaji Nana Choudhary of the village who resigned a job in the Police department and took an important part in Congress work. He also recalled the work of 75 men and women who kept company with Mr. Choudhary in his achievements.

He had come, said Gandhiji, to congratulate the village on that record of service and he was glad to see how clean the surroundings had been kept. If the Congress session had come nearer to them, the reason was perhaps their part in the struggle.

While I am glad to see the way in which you have kept your village clean, I am sorry to say that differentiation of man from man is bad. The other motto says real Hinduism does not recognize discrimination between Harijans and caste Hindus. But during my walk round the village and round the Harijan quarter I found they are differentiating between Harijans and caste Hindus. You are not treating Harijans in the same way as you declare in your motto. You do not allow them to have water from your wells and they are driven to have recourse to tank water which I understand is occasionally also drunk by cattle. This is bad.

Our country has been under foreign domination. We are not a free people. Though all of us agree that swaraj is our birthright, we have not been able to win it so far. Mere membership of Congress means nothing. How many members of Congress are there today in the country? At the most one crore. Then what about the rest of the 34 crores? I have left the

[1] Gandhiji was presented with a purse of Rs. 100 and an address in Marathi. Gandhiji spoke in Hindi. Reports of the speech also appeared in *The Hindu*, *The Hindustan Times* and *The Hitavada*.

Congress. I am not even a four-anna member of the Congress, as I have decided to educate the public—I remain in the 34 crores. For example, there are only 250 out of 2,500 residents of your village as Congress members. Nothing would be lost if you are all not members. Not that I do not want you to become Congress members, but I feel there is no use in your merely becoming Congress members. I am in favour of all of you becoming members of the Congress. I have no objection even if you want to enter legislatures but in your attempt to do so you need not create differences and quarrels amongst yourselves.

I leave the work in the legislatures to those who have the desire, resources and leisure for such work. I have said that nothing substantial could be achieved by entering the legislatures but if Congress decided to capture them and asked Congress members of the legislatures to carry the Congress flag even into the Council Chambers, it is because Congress wants to prevent undesirables capturing those seats and using them in a way detrimental to the national interests.

If real swaraj is to be achieved we must give up quarrelling amongst ourselves. There should be perfect equality and fraternity. All artificial differences between man and man, community and community, class and class should be immediately obliterated. After all we are all human beings, all children of the same God. The moment we realize this and translate this in our daily lives swaraj will be within our grasp.

The Bombay Chronicle, 24-12-1936

195. MESSAGE TO THE ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE[1]

[Before *December 23, 1936*]

I have grown old but will give a message still, if you need one from me. I can only say that until women establish their womanhood, the progress of India in all directions is impossible. When woman whom we call *abala*[2] becomes *sabala*[3], all those who are helpless will become powerful.

The Hindu, 24-12-1936

[1] The conference commenced on December 23 and was presided over by Margaret Cousins.

[2] Weak

[3] Strong

196. LETTER TO RONALD DUNCAN

AS AT SEGAON,
WARDHA,
December 23, 1936

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your pamphlet. The argument appeared to me to be sound so far as it went. Perhaps there is not sufficient emphasis on personal individual conduct irrespective of what society does or does not do. Non-violent action does not depend upon another's co-operation. Violent action is ineffective without the co-operation of others. Here both the forces are conceived in terms of the ultimate good of society.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

RONALD DUNCAN, ESQ.
6 PALL MALL
LONDON

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

197. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

TILAKNAGAR,
December 23, 1936

CHI. AMRITLAL,

The sun has not risen yet and my hand is numb with cold, but I am writing this as your postcard is lying before me. Now you should have more strength than before. There is a competition between you and Mira. She has no doubt regained her strength. She takes four pounds of milk daily and also eight to ten *tolas* of butter and fifteen *tolas* of flour, vegetable and fruit. However, she has not put on weight; it is the same as before. Now she washes her own clothes. Ba, Manu and Kanu arrived here yesterday on their way to Segaon. Here with me are Mahadev, Bablo, Pyarelal and Radhakishan and of course Khan Saheb and Mehrtaj.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10727

198. LETTER TO NARMADABEHN R. PATHAK

December 23, 1936

CHI. NARMADA,

I am writing to you since you have asked me to. Those who think you are mature or capable of taking decisions are mistaken. Your intellect is raw and your mind unsteady. Your ideals are good but you do not have the ability to put them into practice. This is my reading of you. The person who could have guided you on the right path himself cast evil eyes on you and you fell a prey to him. As a result, great injustice was done to the woman for whom you had a soft corner and you abetted in the crime. How can such an immoral relationship inspire in you a spirit of service? Why can't you understand this? There is no clarification either in your letter or in Ramnarayan's letter. This much seems clear to me: either you should forget that you are husband and wife or you should go ahead and indulge in carnal pleasures as you wish. I believe that it is almost impossible to practise *brahmacharya* while calling yourselves husband and wife. At least your thoughts are bound to be carnal. May God be good to you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati C.W. 2781. Courtesy: Ramnarayan N. Pathak

199. LETTER TO RAMNARAYAN N. PATHAK

December 23, 1936

BHAI RAMNARAYAN,

I received the letters of you both. I hope you have not done anything in a fit of excitement. When both of you have decided to practise *brahmacharya*, the marriage does not exist at all. It is clear from your letter that at the root of your marriage was the desire to satisfy your passion. The married couple who voluntarily observe *brahmacharya* are only brother and sister. But you were not even fit to be husband and wife. How

can a man who had relations with a woman ever marry her? I have nothing to say if the sanctity of marriage rites has no importance in your eyes. In that case your relations with Ganga and Narmada should be considered innocent and such a word as immorality should disappear from the language. I am still striving with you because you respect my opinion. However, do not take any step as long as you are not convinced of my arguments. Whatever you do, it is bound to be difficult. I know that it is not easy to overcome passion. My duty is to help you to purify your thoughts. One should not see morality in sin. Passion makes one see right in wrong. Now do whatever you think is proper and stick to whatever you do. It is easy to say this but difficult to put it into practice.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 2783. Courtesy: Ramnarayan N. Pathak

200. *LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

TILAKNAGAR, FAIZPUR,
December 24, 1936

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I got your letter. Which of your questions shall I answer? Kanti has not arrived here so far and I do not know when he will. He has gone to Poona to see one of his friends. Come to Segaon and have a discussion with me. If you stay on, I will give you treatment or have it given to you. It would be right for you to come there for the peace of your mind at least. You still do not write anything about your finger.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 369

201. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

December 24, 1936

Mahatma Gandhi said that he could not conscientiously continue to serve any longer as the President of the League[1], as he could not do without goat's milk He, however, promised to continue to take interest and guide the activities of the League in the same way as he had been doing in the case of the All-India Village Industries Association.

The Hindustan Times, 27-12-1936

202. LETTER TO KASTURBHAI LALBHAI

TILAKNAGAR, FAIZPUR,
December 25, 1936

BHAI KASTURBHAI,

I have received your telegrams and letter. I take it that you have obtained legal opinion on the basic issues I have raised and that it has gone against me. If it is so, one can easily understand that there is nothing you can do in this connection.

The paper No. 2 was of course included on my suggestion but at that time you did not raise any objection. I was not bound in any way and therefore it was my duty to hear the Labour Association. My decision no doubt goes against them but their protest is a part of the representation they have made against us and therefore it must go to the Umpire. I did ask for paper No. 6 and you had no objection to it. I have no objection to dropping Nos. 10 and 11.

Both of us had asked for No. 12. We had certainly agreed that the mistakes should be rectified.

Therefore in my record I have kept all the papers except Nos. 10 and 11. I can say that I have even used them for arriving at my decision. Paper No. 12 is of no use to me, but as your opinion is based on the merits and demerits of the case I believe it is necessary for you.

[1] The All-India Cow Protection League. Gandhiji resigned as its President after it was decided that every trustee must use only cow's milk and products of cow's milk.

If there is difference of opinion between us even over this, let it also be decided by the Umpire. As a lot of time has already been taken up we should not delay matters further by prolonging our correspondence.

About the Rajnagar mill, my opinion is that Chimanbhai has made a serious mistake. I feel that my decision is correct and therefore it is wrong to change it. Had Chimanbhai allowed us to take the decision regarding the remaining mills, I would have imposed a fine on the workers so that the account would have been squared. We should go deeper into the question of reinstating the workers.

I shall try to send my Award with additions and alterations by tomorrow. Kindly arrange to send it along with yours to the Umpire there or wherever he may be.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[PS.]

I forgot one point. We should give copies of our Awards to both the parties. Even if we do not do so the Press will continue to write about it. I went through the cutting you have sent. How can we say from which side the names were leaked out? Are newspapermen averse to indulging in guess work? Sometimes something is bound to come true. Don't you think so?

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4199

203. SPEECH AT OPENING OF KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES EXHIBITION[1]

December 25, 1936

You must have seen from the newspapers that the responsibility for having this session of the Congress in a village is wholly mine. They had also announced that I would go to Faizpur in the beginning of December and supervise all the arrangements about the Exhibition. The latter half of the statement is true,

[1] The exhibition was opened at 8.30 a.m. Among those present were Kasturba Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Vallabhbhai Patel, Sarojini Naidu, Rajendra Prasad, Abul Kalam Azad, Govind Ballabh Pant, J. B. Kripalani, Jamnalal Bajaj and Mahadev Desai. Reports of the speech appeared in *The Hindustan Times*, *The Bombay Chronicle* and other newspapers. What follows is Mahadev Desai's resume of the speech.

and without any false modesty or exaggeration I would say that I am wholly responsible for whatever shortcomings you see here. The idea of having the Congress and the Exhibition in a village originated with me, and I must shoulder the responsibility for whatever defects or shortcomings you will notice here. The credit for anything good that you will see belongs to those who were in charge of the arrangements here. It was Dastane and Dev who accepted my suggestion to have the Congress and Exhibition in a village and with the thoroughness and determination that characterize the Maharashtrians they have carried out their promise. The Exhibition was bound to be according to my conception because it is organized by the All-India Spinners' Association of which I am the President and the All-India Village Industries Association which I am guiding and directing. I had to warn them against creating a Lucknow or Delhi in a Maharashtra village. Why not in that case have the Congress and the Exhibition both in Poona? But if they were to be in a village, they must be in keeping with an Indian village. And no one could do it better than I, because, as I said to them, I had long been a villager by choice, whereas they had become villagers only recently. Of course, I too settled in Segaon only a few months ago, and as I was actually born and bred and educated in a town, my body found it difficult to adjust itself automatically to village life. I had, therefore, malaria there. But, as you know, I threw it off immediately, recovered quickly and am alive and kicking. Part of the reason of course is that I am now care-free, having cast all my cares on the broad shoulders of Jawaharlal and the Sardar. However, let me yield up the real secret of my health, which is that my body happens to be where I had set my heart.

Credit for the arrangements here belongs to the architect Sjt. Mhatre and the artist Sjt. Nandalal Bose. When Nanda Babu responded to my invitation a couple of months ago I explained to him what I wanted, and left it to him to give concrete shape to the conception. For he is a creative artist and I am none. God has given me the sense of art but not the organs to give it concrete shape. He has blessed Sjt. Nandalal Bose with both. I am thankful that he agreed to take upon himself the whole burden of organizing the artistic side of the Exhibition and he came and settled down here some weeks ago to see to everything himself. The result is that the whole Tilaknagar is an exhibition in itself, and so it begins not where I am going to open it but at the main gateway which is a fine

piece of village art. Of course our thanks are due also to Sjt. Mhatre, who has spared no pains in bringing the entire plan to completion. Please remember that Nanda Babu has depended entirely on local material and local labour to bring all the structures here into being.

Now I want you to go and see the Exhibition with, if possible, my eyes. If you will realize that it is organized under the auspices of the A.I.S.A. and A.I.V.I.A., you will know what to expect there. The object of the former is to make the whole of India khadi-clad, a goal which we are unfortunately still far from having reached. The object of the latter is to revive the moribund cottage industries of India. Both khadi and the other cottage industries are vital to the economic welfare of our villages.

This Exhibition is no spectacular show, it is not intended either to dazzle the eyes of the public or to delude them. This is a genuine village Exhibition which has been brought into being by the labour of villagers. It is a pure educative effort. It simply shows the villagers how to double their income if only they will use their hands and feet and the resources around them. I would ask our President to take me to a village in U.P. and I would offer to reconstruct the village not out of Jamnalalji's money but with the help of the hands and feet of the men and women living there, on condition that he induces the villagers to work according to instructions. Our President will perhaps say that as soon as these poor folk begin adding to their income, a zamindar like Jamnalalji would enhance the rent and thus rob the extra income out of their hands. Well, we will not allow the zamindar to do anything of the kind. There is no doubt in my mind that in a country like ours teeming with millions of unemployed, something is needed to keep their hands and feet engaged in order that they may earn an honest living. It is for them that khadi and cottage industries are needed. It is clear to me as daylight that they are badly needed at the present moment. What the future has in store for them I do not know, nor do I care to know.

With this Gandhiji proceeded to describe some of the exhibits that had been placed before him—small tools from the blacksmith's smithy which had been made overnight, articles made by Andhra workmen out of grass growing on river banks (e.g. pouches and spectacle-cases), fox's hide cured and tanned and lined with khadi at the Wardha tannery, and so on.

These little things add substantially to the income of the poor villagers. If you can ensure them three annas instead of

the three pice that they get today, they will think they have won swaraj. That is what khadi is trying to do for the spinners today.

In brief we have to teach them how to turn waste into wealth, and that is what the Exhibition is meant to teach them. When I met Nanda Babu two months ago I asked him not to bring from Santiniketan costly paintings from his own school of art, lest untimely rain should ruin them. He accepted my advice and has collected things from the neighbourhood of this place. He launched out to the villages with the eye of an artist that is his, and picked up numerous things from the peasants' households, things that never catch an ordinary eye as striking objects of art, but which his discerning eye picked up and arranged and thus clothed with a new meaning.

Sjt. Vaikunth Mehta has apologized for the small size of the Exhibition as compared with the previous ones, but there was no occasion for apology. It does not contain one superfluous exhibit and the crafts represented mean so much additional production. Look, for instance, at the samples of hand-made paper out of *munj* grass, banana bark and bamboo. Bamboo has indeed played a prominent part in all the structures you see here, and you may be sure that after this Congress camp breaks up all the bamboo will be turned to good account.

You could not but have noticed the grand simplicity of the procession that was organized for our President, especially the beautifully designed and decorated chariots drawn by six pairs of bullocks. Well, all that was designed in order to prepare you for what awaited you here. No city amenities or comforts, but everything that poor villagers could provide. The place is thus a place of pilgrimage for us all, our Kashi and our Mecca, where we have come in order to offer our prayers for freedom and to consecrate ourselves to the nation's service. You have not come here to lord it over the poor peasants but to learn how to get off their backs by participating in their daily toil, by doing the scavenger's job, by washing for yourselves, by grinding your own flour, etc. For the first time in the history of the Congress you are being given here rice unpolished of its substance and chapatis made out of hand-ground flour, plenty of fresh air and clean mother earth to rest your limbs upon. But you will please bear with all the poor organizers' shortcomings, for in Khan Saheb's language we are all Khudai Khidmatgars—servants of God, come here not to take but to tender service.

Harijan, 2-1-1937

204. HALF A DOZEN OR SIX

The following Press cutting[1] has been sent to me by Thakkar Bapa.

Whether the Harijan is nominally a Christian, Muslim or Hindu and now Sikh, he is still a Harijan. He can't change his spots inherited from Hinduism so called. He may change his garb and call himself a Catholic Harijan, or a Muslim Harijan or neo-Muslim or neo-Sikh, his untouchability will haunt him during his lifetime. It is one and the same thing whether you call the numeral after five half a dozen or six. Not until untouchability is removed from Hinduism will the taint be removed from Harijans, no matter what label they adopt. Therefore Harijans have it in their hands either to save Hinduism or to destroy it, as caste Hindus have it in theirs. It is no doubt easier for Harijans to change labels than for caste Hindus to change their hearts, but it may be easier for Harijans to rise superior to every earthly temptation and be consciously steadfast in the faith in which they have been denied by their fellows the most elementary human rights. It is no doubt difficult for anybody to resist the temptations to which Harijans are exposed today. It will therefore be a marvel if they prove true and cling to their ancestral faith with the determination to purify it by a conscious supreme effort. They can do this as they could not before for they know that there is a growing body of caste Hindus who are making common cause with them and making reparation for their own past wrongs and the continuing wrongs of fellow caste Hindus. Thus viewed, the Kumbakonam incident is as much a shame of the Roman Church as it is of Hinduism.

Harijan, 26-12-1936

[1] Not reproduced here. It reported that during the Sunday service in St. Mary's Cathedral at Kumbakonam caste Catholics withdrew from the service on Catholic Harijans entering in an organized body and distributing themselves among caste Catholics instead of occupying the portion intended for them.

205. THE SECRET OF IT

The Deputy President of the Travancore Assembly has written a long article to disprove my statement that "the way for the great step (the Proclamation) was prepared by the gentle but persistent effort of the Travancore Branch of the Harijan Sevak Sangh".[1] The writer even asks the local Sangh to desist from organizing public meetings and importing outsiders like Shri C. Rajagopalachari to advertise their work. He contrasts my utter failure to have temples opened in Ahmedabad where I must be presumed to have the greatest influence.

What I meant was clear from my language that the *savarna* mind was made responsive by the unremitting zeal of the local Sangh in educating and preparing it. To my knowledge there was no other body or organization in Travancore working among the *savarnas* to awaken their conscience. There was nothing in my writing to suggest that the act of the Maharaja was influenced by the activity of the Harijan Sevak Sangh.

For the rest the local workers know best what to do and how to act.

So far as my own influence is concerned I must plead guilty to the Deputy President's charge. Not only have I not succeeded in having temples opened in Ahmedabad but I have not succeeded in having temples opened even in Wardha after my having established myself there. And what is still more damaging to my reputation is that I have not succeeded in having the only two caste temples in Segaon opened to the Harijans of the little village. But this confession leaves me unrepentant. My failure is a stepping-stone to the success in which I have full faith. But it will come in God's own time. "Mine is but to do and die."

Therefore the glory of the miracle of Travancore belongs undoubtedly to the Maharaja, his good mother, and his able Diwan. And herein is a lesson for us all who are interested in the root-and-branch removal of untouchability. Rightly or wrongly the tradition in Hinduism is that a Hindu Prince has the authority, as it is his duty, to propound *Smritis* known to the moderns as laws or rules consistent with the fundamentals of religion for the due fulfilment by the people of their moral obligations.

[1] *Vide* "An Example for Hindu Princes and Their Advisers", pp. 45-8.

When years ago I had discussions with the Pandits of Vykom they had assured me that in spite of the *Smriti* they had produced in support of their contention, they would obey regulations to the contrary if they were promulgated by their ruler. This belief probably accounts for the happy phenomenon we are witnessing in Travancore where its population is whole-heartedly giving full effect to the Proclamation. If the other Hindu States will follow the example of Travancore they will also perhaps discover that their people will carry out the rules that may be issued. Anyway, the people of the respective States might well prepare public opinion in the direction. But they must not relax their effort for having temples opened by their respective trustees without waiting for Princely lead. For the reformers' argument is that no new *Smriti* is required for opening temples to Harijans or for removing untouchability. Only we may not leave out any honourable avenue open to us for fulfilling our purpose. And appealing to the Princes to take the lead is an honourable avenue and most likely to hasten success.

Harijan, 26-12-1936

206. CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY

The Church Missionary Society of England has published a pamphlet prepared by Prebendary W. W. Cash, in which

> The C.M.S is appealing for an emergency fund of £ 25,000 to enable extra grants to be made during the next five years to those areas where this big movement is taking place, and the Society appeals to the whole Church to support it in this effort. Not for ourselves do we ask people to give, but for the sake of the hundreds of thousands who are dimly groping after Christ, and who are finding spiritual life and social uplift through the Gospel.

'The big movement' referred to is the movement for the conversion of Harijans. The money is wanted for work in the Telugu area and Travancore.

The appeal ends thus:

> The movement among the outcastes is spreading to the caste people, and within the last five years it is estimated that no less than 30,000 caste people from fifty-one different castes have become Christians. This is a movement of such far-reaching consequences that we dare not refuse help. The thousands of today may become millions tomorrow. Will you help us to go forward in a great advance that the harvest may be reaped?

Its opening sentences run as follows:

> Recent news in the papers has attracted widespread attention to the untouchables of India. We have read of great conferences of out-caste people who have decided to break away from Hinduism. We have heard of mass movements towards Christianity and of baptisms of tens of thousands of converts in recent years. We have followed with growing interest the development of the young churches in these rural areas, particularly in the Dornakal and Travancore Dioceses. We are therefore compelled to examine more closely what is happening in India and to see how far we are reaping the harvest which has come.

It contains among others these three headlines:

1. What is happening among these people?
2. Who is Dr. Ambedkar?
3. What does India say to Dr. Ambedkar's advice?

I cull the following from what appears under the third head-line:

> There is no doubt that there have been important repercussions all over India from the conference of untouchables. Mr. Gandhi had previously carried on a campaign for the removal of untouchability, but he has signally failed because he clung to the Hindu system which has been the cause of the trouble.

In passing I may remark that I am utterly unconscious of "signal failure". I have not clung to "the Hindu system which has been the cause of the trouble". On the contrary I have rejected that which has been the cause of the trouble, namely, untouchability. And I have not abandoned the campaign as suggested in the question.

Under the same headline occurs also this paragraph:

> In the C. M. S. area of the Dornakal Diocese there are no less than three hundred villages appealing for teachers; they represent forty thousand people definitely asking for baptism. The Bishop reckons that probably about a million people in his diocese are moving Christward.

Though I have travelled in the Telugu area often enough I have never heard of forty thousand Harijans or any figure near it asking for baptism.

Under the same headline occurs also this precious paragraph:

> In Travancore, the Ezhava community are definitely on trek They are a superior type of the 'exterior' castes Many of them are educated; some are landowners, others lawyers, doctors, officials and teachers; but they are excluded from the temples and suffer from the

> disabilities of the outcaste community. The leaders of one section of these people numbering over 850,000 have waited on the Bishop in Travancore, because they are anxious that their entire community should become Christians. This is by no means entirely due to Dr. Ambedkar, but is another incident in a situation which is growing in magnitude from day to day.

I dare not speak for the Ezhava leaders. The papers report them to have congratulated the Maharaja on his Proclamation. But that may not be inconsistent with their anxiety that their entire community should become Christians. Let them speak if they will on the contents of the quotation.

The exaggerations of Bishop Pickett, with which I had the misfortune of dealing last week,[1] are beaten perhaps by those contained in the appeal.

There is no other way to deal with the exaggerations of which the appeal is full than by living them down and by the truth working through the lives of the reformers. The appeal deals not with the past but with contemporary events. And if millions are waiting to bear witness to the message of Christ, as and in the form in which it comes through the agents of the C.M.S., my disbelief in the statements made in the appeal will melt like snow under the rays of the midday sun.

Harijan, 26-12-1936

207. *AWARD IN LABOUR DISPUTE*[2]

TILAKNAGAR,
December 26, 1936

I. The Ahmedabad Mill-owners' Association has referred to arbitration the following questions:

(a) The M.O.A.'s demand for a 20% cut in wages.
(b) Complaint against the New Maneckchowk Mill.
(c) Complaint against Motilal Hirabhai Mill.
(d) Complaint against Rajnagar Mills No. 1.

The reference is subject to two conditions, viz.,

1. The Arbitrators should give a simultaneous award on all the questions referred to them.

[1] *Vide* "What Is a Miracle?", pp. 149-51.

[2] Gandhiji wrote this in Gujarati and the English translation was arranged by Kasturbhai Lalbhai. *Vide* also "Letter to Kasturbhai Lalbhai", p. 207.

2. With reference to the mill which might have resigned from the M.O.A. whether the Arbitrators have any jurisdiction in respect of complaints against them before they enter upon merits.

II. Sheth Chamanlal Girdhardas Parekh was Permanent Arbitrator on behalf of the M.O.A. but he having resigned the M.O.A. has appointed Sheth Kasturbhai in his place only with reference to the questions referred to above. The absence of Sheth Chamanlal has been felt by all.

III. The Arbitrators had conversations with representatives of the M.O.A. and T.L.A. on 2nd, 3rd and 4th instant at Wardha and Segaon. At these meetings no evidence was taken or registered beyond consultations. But at my instance and for my edification certain particulars were supplied as embodied in Appendices 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9. With reference to the admission of these Appendices as part of the record to be submitted to the Umpire, it is likely that my brother Arbitrator will object to their admission. I had asked for the information embodied in these Appendices in Wardha and Segaon. There was no objection raised by my brother at the time. Appendix O was asked for by us jointly and if that also is objected to, I do not mind its exclusion as it is unnecessary for my decision.

IV. The evidence that is submitted to the Umpire is embodied in the fourteen appendices attached hereto.

V. From the evidence submitted it appears that the T.L.A. has been obliged reluctantly to agree to the restricted reference (Appendix II). In my opinion, if all the points of dispute between the two parties had been referred to arbitration, the Arbitrators would have found it easier to give their Award because such questions are as a rule closely related to each other. Although therefore there seems to me to be validity in the T.L.A.'s protest, its letter dated November 30th (Appendix I) is a clear acceptance, however involuntary, of the restriction. Nevertheless the T.L.A. has a perfect right to have all these questions referred to arbitration.

On Wage Cut

VI. After having read the papers herewith and having given full consideration to them on the question of the M.O.A.'s demand for a wage cut, I have come to the conclusion that evidence submitted furnishes no cause for any cut.

VII. The last Arbitration Award was given on the 17th January 1935 (Appendix IV, sub-appendix 1).

VIII. In that Award the Arbitrator has thrown certain responsibilities on both the parties of which three are as follows:

(a) Earnest efforts should be made to standardize the wages of piece-workers as soon as possible after 1st January 1936.

(b) With a view to providing for a prompt settlement of all wages questions on either side in future the parties will meet and try to evolve a scheme for automatic adjustment of wages.

(c) The mills which are desirous of adopting rationalization will prepare before 30th June 1935 a register of workers who are working and who are likely to be unemployed in the departments to which such schemes will apply.

IX. From the evidence submitted to the Arbitrators it appears that the M.O.A. has not discharged its share of these responsibilities nor has it taken sufficient pains to do so. In my opinion it is possible, with sufficient endeavour, to standardize wages and although it is difficult to evolve a scheme whereby the question of increasing or decreasing wages can be automatically regulated, I do not consider it to be impossible. It was the obvious duty of the M.O.A. to keep a registry of hands in connection with rationalization. In all these three matters either party could have availed itself of the assistance of the Arbitrators but it does not appear to have occurred to them to do so.

X. It is necessary to bear this in mind that the Award of 1935 was originally a voluntary agreement between the parties. To give it the form of an Award was obviously in the natural course but in view of the fact that the Award was merely a stabilization of the voluntary agreement, it was doubly the duty of the parties to give effect to it and is so today.

XI. In my opinion, not until the M.O.A. has made a serious attempt to carry out the terms of the last settlement and the impossibility of its being carried out has been proved is it open for the M.O.A. to ask for a wage cut.

XII. However, the general understanding arrived at between the two parties has the same value as the Award in determining the question of wage cut. The fact that in spite of the admission of the necessity of having a sub-arbitrator appointed to adjudicate upon petty disputes arising from time to time the appointment has not been made is injurious to the harmonious relations between the parties and becomes a cause of mutual distrust and this in its turn harms the industry. It seems improper that the

workmen's complaints may not be disposed of in time or not at all and that the question of wage cut can still be referred to arbitraation.

XIII. That the permanent Arbitrators cannot investigate every complaint is self-evident. Those who seek justice have to come with clean hands. In my opinion the M.O.A. has not performed its duty in this matter and has no right to ask for a wage cut until this duty of appointing a sub-arbitrator is discharged.

XIV. Such being my opinion it is unnecessary for me to enter into the merits of the case for wage cut.

XV. But a study of the papers submitted by the parties has left on me the impression that the period that has elapsed since the last Award was given is too short to warrant a case for wage cut. Besides, the M.O.A.'s statement does not substantiate its claim.

XVI. At this stage I would like to restate the principles that for the good of both parties I have presented to them as a result of my close and unbroken contact with the industry for a period of 18 years in the capacity of Arbitrator.

(a) No cut should be made till the mills have ceased to make any profit and are obliged to fall back upon their capital for continuing the industry.

(b) There should be no cut till the wages have reached the level adequate for maintenance. It is impossible to conceive a time when the workmen have begun to regard the industry as if it were their own property and they would then be prepared to help it out of a crisis by taking the barest maintenance consisting of a dry crust and working day and night. That would be a voluntary arrangement. Such cases are irrelevant to the present consideration.

(c) There should be a common understanding as to what should be included in determining a living wage.

(d) The consideration of the deterioration in individual mills cannot form part of a case for a cut in wages of labour in general.

(e) It is vital to the well-being of the industry that workmen should be regarded as equals with the shareholders and that they have therefore every right to possess an accurate knowledge of the transactions of the mills.

(f) There should be a register of all available mill-hands acceptable to both the parties and the custom of taking

labour through any agency other than the T.L.A. should be stopped.

XVII. I have not presented these principles in the belief that they will be acceptable either to the brother Arbitrator or to the mill-owners or even to the workmen. These have not guided my decision in the present case but I am convinced that without the acceptance of these principles the industry, i.e., the owners and the workmen, are in danger.

XVIII. Before concluding the discussion on the wage cut it seems to be necessary for me to allude to a thing that has come under my observation in the course of the proceedings. The control of the M.O.A. over individual mills appears to have slackened. When the M.O A.'s decisions appear repugnant to individual mill-owners, they are tempted to secede. This is undoubtedly a regrettable state of things and requires to be mended. But it cannot be cited in support of a case for wage cut. The burden of maintaining such mills cannot be laid on the shoulders of labour. The deterioration of individual mills has been found to be due to the shortcomings of managers, out-of-date machinery or such other internal defects.

New Maneckchowk Mill

XIX. The reduction of wages by this mill is not denied but no mill has any right to initiate a reduction of its own will. M.O.A. says that this mill has retired from the Association and the Arbitration has, therefore, no jurisdiction to entertain the case. One notice of reduction was issued on 8th August last and the other on the 2nd October last. Meanwhile the mill seceded from the Association on the 20th August last. The M.O.A.'s statement that the reduction was made on September 30th is evidently a slip of the pen. Whether it is or not, the fact of the resignation does not debar the T.L.A. from bringing the case before Arbitration. If, whenever a mill so acts as to have its action impeached by the Arbitrators and therefore resigns with a view to escaping discipline, the system of arbitration becomes meaningless. How the M.O.A. can enforce discipline against a seceder is another question. Such a question, when it arises, can be dealt with by resort to arbitration if it becomes necessary. In my opinion the mill in question should restore the reduced amount and withdraw the notice. If the defaulting mill does not carry out this decision the M.O.A. should co-operate with the T.L.A. in adopting all legitimate measures against the defaulter.

MOTILAL HIRABHAI MILL

XX. I can give no definite opinion on the papers submitted. If the owners of this mill do not furnish the required information the M.O.A. should procure it without delay and if it is not procured the T.L.A. is at liberty to come before the Arbitrators. Although the M.O.A. and the mill do not appear to have given the necessary help to the T.L.A., the latter erred in assisting the workmen in resorting to the strike if such assistance was in fact given. However provoking the circumstances might be, workmen cannot cease work without due notice nor can owners impose reduction of their own motion. This is inherent in the acceptance of the principle of arbitration.

THE DECISION

Thus on the points submitted to arbitration my decision is as follows:

1. The case for wage cut is dismissed for the reason that the M.O.A. has failed to prove it.

2. The alleged resignation by the New Maneckchowk Mill does not put it outside the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Board. The mill should restore the reduced wages and withdraw the cut notice. If the owners do not carry out this decision, the M.O.A. should co-operate with the T.L.A. in taking all legitimate steps to enforce discipline and should seek the assistance of the Arbitration Board, if necessary.

3. I am unable to give a definite decision about the complaint against Motilal Hirabhai Mill.

History of Wage Adjustments in the Ahmedabad Industry, Vol IV, pp. 33-40

208. LETTER TO KASTURBHAI LALBHAI

December 26, 1936

BHAI KASTURBHAI,

I am enclosing herewith my Award[1] with two extra copies, one for the Labour Association and the other for the Mill-owners' Association.

Please go through the additions and alterations made therein. There is a reference to sub-appendices in the Appendix. As desired by you I have dropped sub-appendices and have made a note to that effect in the Appendix. Please see.

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

After writing to you yesterday, I thought about the question at night and while writing this it has occurred to me that greater justice would be done by not recommending payment of arrears of the wages and therefore I am revising the decision. I have only made a recommendation concerning the wages, which you will see. You will also find therein my reasons for not paying the arrears. It is in conformity with my nature. If you had not drawn my attention to it, I would not perhaps have noticed the error in my approach. However, you drove me to hard thinking. I very much wanted to accept your suggestion. You demonstrated your friendship by drawing my attention to my error. Should I thank you for that? Truth will cease to exist in this world if friends do not fulfil their duty of cautioning one another.

I hope you have received the telegram I have sent to you. It is good if you are able to act accordingly. It hurts me that hundreds of workers are unemployed. It also pains me that we are not allowed to hear their case. Therefore please do not waste a single minute. I do not have a copy of the letter to the Umpire. Has he been given fifteen days' time limit? Whatever it may be, please request the Umpire on behalf of us both that he should give the decision as early as possible even within that time limit.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4200

209. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

December 26, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

Your two letters before me. You have to live down the hottest tempers if you are to express ahimsa in your life. It makes no difference whether the temper is directed towards you personally or towards your wards or dear friends. They, Balwantsinha and Munnalal, would not have been with me if they were perfect men or very nearly so.

May reach there 30th inst.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6370 Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9836

210. MESSAGE TO STUDENTS[1]

FAIZPUR,
[*December 26, 1936*][2]

What new message can I give you at the age of 68? And where is the use of my giving you a message if you pass a resolution there of assassinating me or burning my effigy? Assassinating the body of course does not matter, for out of my ashes a thousand Gandhis will arise. But what if you assassinate or burn the principles I have lived for?

Harijan, 16-1-1937

211 HINDU CODE OF CONDUCT

I have preserved the following letter[3] for the past seven months.

I have been keeping the letter suppressed in the belief that it would be better if I got some learned scholar to reply to it instead of doing so myself. Shri Anandshankarbhai has at my request taken the work in hand now. However, the book which will result will not solve the above question in the manner desired by the correspondent. It is my hope that he will glean the required information from the book. I am putting forward something of that sort here; because I have spent years working amongst Harijans. My experience, therefore, may be useful to other workers like the correspondent.

I do not talk to Harijans about the basic tenets of Hinduism. If they had separate temples I would certainly visit them. I would jest with the priest there. Ordinarily, the poor

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter" The message was in response to a request from the secretary of a students' conference.

[2] Mahadev Desai says the message was given the day before Gandhiji made his "great speech on the cult of the charkha", which was on December 27

[3] Not translated here. The correspondent had written to say that it was better to teach Harijans how to observe Hindu religion in day-to-day life than to give them lectures on culture.

man is very ignorant. This does not mean that a caste Hindu priest knows more. But why should the latter listen to me? A Harijan priest would regard me as a great man and lend me an ear at least. It is a different thing if he lets my words go out through the other ear. I would say the following to a band of Harijans: So far, we have spurned you; we did not even look at you, we did not share your joys and sorrows. Let me now tell you what our religion expects of us.

1. If we are not in the habit of waking up before dawn, we should form it.

2. There are many persons who start smoking immediately on waking up, others, little better, make the whole house aware of their having woken up by talking profanities. Instead of doing this, one should take the name of God before leaving the bed and thank Him for the night having passed safely.

3. On leaving the bed we should immediately awaken our children and then, sitting in a place which is not frequented by people, we should clean our teeth with *babul* or some other twig. We should use either salt or powdered charcoal which we must keep ready at home to clean our teeth and with the halves of the twig we should scrape the tongue and rinse the mouth well.

We should sprinkle water over our eyes and remove mucus if there is any. Having done that we must wash our face, nose, ears, etc., carefully and wipe these with a clean cloth.

4. If one has to evacuate one's bowels and that particular village has no latrine, or if there is one, but one does not like to use it, this function should be performed in a remote place which people do not frequent. The excreta should be properly covered with earth and the organs concerned should be properly cleansed with water. As both the excretory organs throw out waste, these should be properly cleansed and the waste material eliminated. Thereafter the hands should be washed with water and earth, and the water-pot should also be cleaned well.

5 While performing this daily routine one should either hum *Ramdhun* or some devotional song. If one does not know any of these, one should merely keep repeating the name of Rama.

6. It would be daylight by the time one returns home. Other members of the family will also have performed their natural functions as mentioned above. All should then get together and sing *bhajans* or *kirtans* for five minutes to half an hour. So long as one does not know any such thing, one can at least repeat the name of Rama.

7. Thereafter, everyone should set out for work after taking breakfast. Children who do not work should go to school.

8. Before taking the midday meal, everyone should bathe with clean water and scrub the entire body. Dhoti, sari and such other garments should be washed. The poor who do not have the facility of daily change should wear a loin-cloth while bathing. The body should be rubbed and wiped after a bath.

9. In this manner, when night falls while performing one's daily tasks, God's name should be uttered after the evening meal and before going to bed and He should be thanked that the day passed without any mishaps.

10. The hands should be washed after every meal and after performing any task which soils the hands. After a meal, one should gargle and rinse one's mouth.

11. We should realize that God knows our every thought, sees everything we do. Hence no one can deceive Him. How then can we deceive our brothers and sisters who are His creatures? It may well be that these persons are unaware of our deception. If they come to know of the latter, how can we cheat them at all?

12. Hence we should sincerely serve those under whom we work and not deceive them.

13. And, if we do not deceive anyone, how can we commit any theft? Even cheating while weighing goods amounts to theft.

14. We certainly would not like anyone to abuse us or beat us or misbehave with our mother or sisters. Hence we should not abuse anyone, not even our wives and children.

15. Nor should we beat anyone. This includes our wives and children. These persons have to be separately mentioned because many men regard their wives and children as their property. But it is a grave error. In our religion the wife has been regarded the equal of the husband. Hence, she is known as the other half, co-partner in religion, a goddess. Children are not our property. Parents are the protectors of children. Hence, even with them, we should be gentle, tolerant and patient.

16. Just as we should have goodwill towards our wives and children, similarly we should treat our elders and our parents with respect.

17. And, as shown in 14 above, it is obvious that a man should treat another man's wife as his sister or mother and, similarly, a woman should regard another man as her father or brother.

18. Just as all men are creatures of God, so also animals are His creatures; hence they are also a part of the family. We should therefore be good towards them too. We cannot misuse even mud or stones. Our religion teaches us even such prayer: "Oh! Mother Earth, we walk upon you every day. We depend upon your support. Forgive us for touching you with our feet." Having said this, we put a pinch of dust upon our heads.

19. And hence we should be kind towards our animals; we should feed them properly; we should certainly not overload them with burdens, we should keep them in clean places; and refrain from beating them.

20. Similarly, we should pluck leaves and cut trees only as much as we must. We should use discretion while doing so. We should not destroy wantonly.

21. So far as possible, we should avoid eating meat. Beef should be totally shunned. Cow protection occupies a very prominent place in our religion.

22. In accordance with clause 19, all living creatures are our brothers and sisters. Hence, our *rishis* and *munis* taught us that we should regard the cow as our mother and should develop friendly relations towards all living beings including non-human creatures. It is in the fitness of things to regard the cow as our mother as she, like the mother, gives us milk. One who gets milk does not require fish or meat. Moreover, the cow provides us with bullocks and even after death gives us leather, manure, fat for carts, etc , and such other things. Hence, we should never kill a cow.

23. And if we may not kill a cow, how can we eat her flesh after her death? No sensible people in the world eat carrion.

24. By becoming an addict, a man renders himself virtually insane; sometimes, he completely loses his senses. Hence liquor, toddy, bhang, *ganja*, opium and tobacco should be eschewed.

25. Gambling involves deception and the money obtained through it is tainted. Hence we should not gamble.

26. Others are as fond of their religion as we are of ours. Hence we should respect all religions equally. And, therefore, we should bear no ill will or have disputes with Muslims, Christians and followers of other faiths.

27. If religion teaches us that all are children of God, there can be no high or low among them and there should not be even the faintest trace of untouchability.

28. Finally, our religion also tells us that anyone who does not earn his living with the sweat of his brow, eats stolen food. Hence, everyone should earn his bread by engaging himself in such manual tasks as farming, or making cloth, etc., and it is for this very reason that each person should produce foodgrains, khadi and such other articles of food and clothing in his own village.

These things which I have often said on different occasions have been put down in written form here. Other clauses may be added to these when the occasion arises bearing in mind the universal elements like truth and non-violence, which are involved in them.

[From Gujarati]
Harijanbandhu, 27-12-1936

212. DUTY TOWARDS CHRISTIAN HARIJANS

A worker in the cause of Harijans has asked me what should be the duty of the Harijan Sevak Sangh towards Christian Harijans. His letter contains many subsidiary questions which need not be reproduced here. This article is intended to answer those very questions.

Ordinarily it may be said that the special duty which the Sangh has taken upon itself and attempts to fulfil towards Hindu Harijans, does not hold good in case of those who have become Christians. However, the goodwill that one human being should have towards another should also be shown towards Christian Harijans. This rule applies to people of all faiths. We cannot be displeased with a Harijan because he calls himself a Christian. However, if he is in receipt of a scholarship or any such special assistance from the Sangh, that should be discontinued. But if, despite having become a Christian, he is in a Harijan school and wishes to continue in it, he cannot be turned out. Perhaps he may be asked to pay his fees. He cannot be given the usual free clothes, etc., as the Sangh's funds are meant for Hindu Harijans only. Hindus, other than Harijans, can be admitted to Harijan schools, but they cannot join them without paying fees. The same rule should apply to those who have become Christians.

Christian Harijans should not be offered temptations to embrace Hinduism again. However, if a person wishes to return to his own faith we should not prevent him from doing so.

But if Christian Harijans ask for facilities such as the use of wells or medical help during illness, it is our common dharma to render such service. However, even in these instances assistance cannot be given from Harijan funds. But facilities should be provided for these persons to draw water from wells which are used by Hindu Harijans. Sangh workers should provide Christian Harijans also the services of a doctor or worker who renders free service to Hindu Harijans. It is their dharma to do so.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 27-12-1936

213. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

TILAKNAGAR,
December 27, 1936

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I got your letter. I have to go to Travancore on the 10th. Kanti arrived the day before yesterday. I had a three minutes' talk with him last night. You must reach Segaon on the 3rd.

I am in a great hurry.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 370

214. SPEECH AT EXHIBITION GROUND, FAIZPUR

December 27, 1936

This speech was scheduled for 8.30. I am sorry that it is being delivered so late at 9.15. But there was no alternative. People have turned up here in such large numbers and as our exhibition has only screens of unseasoned bamboo for walls, if everyone makes a rush for it they would collapse. Hence, arrangements had to be made to protect things and the organizers took some time in doing this. They were not prepared for such an onrush. You will feel that there has been a trick in putting my speech on the programme. This was deliberate. If for no other reason, people would come to hear me and give two annas for the exhibition. While doing so if they by accident or mistake

purchase some khadi and have a glimpse of rural art, they will earn some merit without any particular effort and so will I.

You must have seen that the whole of Tilaknagar is like an exhibition. The credit for this goes to Shri Nandalal Bose. It was he who decided that the plan for both the exhibition and the Congress should be the same. Only a paltry sum has been spent in doing so. I do not know of any Congress session which has been organized at such a low cost. Of course, in my opinion, some expenses have been unnecessarily incurred, but, then, is this not the first Congress to be held in a village? A fair amount had to be spent in obtaining land. But we have done something which will encourage us to hold the future sessions of the Congress in villages. You can see the crowd is increasing. There are many volunteers, but they seem to get lost in the crowd. There are so many persons who have to be fed that it has become difficult to make arrangements for them.[1]

I am going to say nothing new today. The cult of the spinning-wheel is 18 years old. I said in 1918 that we could win swaraj through the spinning-wheel. My faith in the ability of the spinning-wheel is as bright today as when I first declared it in 1918. It has become richer for the experience and experiment of all these years.

But you should know the implications of the wheel or khadi, its product. It is not enough that one wears khadi on ceremonial occasions or even wears it to the exclusion of all other cloth if he surrounds himself with *videshi* in everything else. Khadi means the truest swadeshi spirit, identification with the starving millions.

Let there be no mistake about my conception of swaraj. It is complete independence of alien control and complete economic independence. So at one end you have political independence, at the other the economic. It has two other ends. One of them is moral and social, the corresponding end is dharma, i.e., religion in the highest sense of the term. It includes Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc., but is superior to them all. You may recognize it by the name of Truth, not the honesty of expedience but the living Truth that pervades everything and will survive all destruction and all transformation. Moral and social uplift may be recognized by the term we are used to, i.e., non-violence. Let us

[1] This is taken from the Gujarati version published in *Harijanbandhu*. What follows is reproduced from Mahadev Desai's report in *Harijan*, "A Restatement of Faith". The report was revised by Gandhiji.

call this the square of swaraj, which will be out of shape if any of its angles is untrue. In the language of the Congress we cannot achieve this political and economic freedom without truth and non-violence, in concrete terms without a living faith in God and hence moral and social elevation.

By political independence I do not mean an imitation of the British House of Commons, or the Soviet rule of Russia or the Fascist rule of Italy or the Nazi rule of Germany. They have systems suited to their genius. We must have ours suited to ours. What that can be is more than I can tell. I have described it as *Ramarajya*, i.e., sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority. The Congress constitutions of Nagpur and Bombay for which I am mainly responsible are an attempt to achieve this type of swaraj.

Then take economic independence. It is not a product of industrialization of the modern or the Western type. Indian economic independence means to me the economic uplift of every individual, male and female, by his or her own conscious effort. Under that system all men and women will have enough clothing —not the mere loin-cloth, but what we understand by the term necessary articles of clothing and enough food including milk and butter which are today denied to millions.

This brings me to socialism. Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught: "All land belongs to Gopal, where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of the line and he can therefore unmake it."[1] Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the State, i.e., the people. That the land today does not belong to the people is too true. But the fault is not in the teaching. It is in us who have not lived up to it.

I have no doubt that we can make as good an approach to it as is possible for any nation, not excluding Russia, and that without violence. The most effective substitute for violent dispossession is the wheel with all its implications. Land and all property is his who will work it. Unfortunately the workers are or have been kept ignorant of this simple fact.

Let us now see how India came to be utterly impoverished. History tells us that the East India Company ruined the cotton manufacture and by all kinds of means made her dependent upon Lancashire for her cloth, the next great necessity of man. It

[1] सबै भूमि गोपाल की वामें अटक कहां ?
जाके मनमें अटक है, सोई अटक रहा।

is still the largest item of import. It thus created a huge army of partially unemployed men and women counted in millions and gave them no other employment in return. With the destruction of hand-ginning, carding, spinning and weaving to a certain extent, perished the other industries of India's villages. Continuous unemployment has induced in the people a kind of laziness which is most depressing. Thus whilst the alien rule is undoubtedly responsible for the growing pauperism of the people, we are more responsible for it. If the middle-class people, who betrayed their trust and bartered away the economic independence of India for a mess of pottage, would now realize their error and take the message of the wheel to the villagers and induce them to shed their laziness and work at the wheel, we can ameliorate the condition of the people to a great extent. It would be a terrible thing if laziness replaces industry and despair triumphsover hope.

The parliamentary programme is in the air. It has come to stay and rightly. But it cannot bring us independence. Its function is strictly limited though quite necessary. Its success will prevent the Government from claiming that Ordinance rule or any measure restricting our progress to the goal was sanctioned by popular representatives. Hence the necessity for voters voting for the Congress candidates who dare not vote for unpopular measures without being liable to Congress discipline. The success of that programme may also bring some relief in individual cases such as the release of Shri Subhas Bose or the detenus. But that is not independence, political or economic.

Then look at it in another way. Only a limited number of men and women can become members of legislatures, say 1,500. How many from this audience can become legislators? And just now no more than 3½ crores can vote for these 1,500 members. What about the remaining 31½ crores? In our conception of swaraj they are the real masters and the 3½ crores are the former's servants who in their turn are masters of the 1,500. Thus the latter are doubly servants, if they will be true to their trust.

But the 31½ crores have also a trust to discharge towards themselves and the nation of which they as individuals are but tiny parts. And if they remain lazy, know nothing of swaraj and how to win it, they will themselves become slaves of the 1,500 legislators. For my argument the 3½ crores of voters here belong to the same category as the 31½ crores. For if they do not become industrious and wise, they will be so many pawns in the hands of 1,500 players, it is of little consequence whether they

are Congressmen or otherwise. If the voters wake up only to register their votes every three years or more and then go off to sleep, their servants will become their masters.

The only way I know to prevent such a catastrophe is for the 35 crores to be industrious and wise. This they can only be if they will take up the spinning-wheel and the other village industries. They will not take to them unintelligently. I can tell you from experience that the effort means adult education of the correct type and requires possession of patience, moral fibre and a scientific and practical knowledge of the industry the worker seeks to introduce in the village of his choice.

In such a scheme the spinning-wheel becomes its centre. If you call it the solar system, the wheel becomes the golden disc and the industries the planets revolving round it in obedience to the inviolable law of the system. When the sun lost its illuminating power by the action of the East India Company, the planets lost their power and became invisible or almost so. The sun is being reinstated in his past status now and the planets are regaining their motion in exact proportion to the strength of the sun.

Now perhaps you will understand the meaning and the message of the charkha. I said in 1920 that if the Congress truly and successfully worked the programme laid down in 1920 including the fourfold constructive programme of khadi, communal unity, prohibition of intoxicants and removal by Hindus of untouchability, the attainment of swaraj within a year was a certainty. I am neither sorry for nor ashamed of having made that declaration. I would like to repeat that declaration before you today. Whenever the fourfold programme is achieved in its fulness, you can have swaraj for the asking. For you will then have attained the power to take it. Just think for a moment where the charkha stands today in your faith or action. Is the mutual secret assasination of Bombay a sign of communal unity? Where is total prohibition? Have the Hindus rid themselves of untouchability root and branch? One swallow does not make a summer. Travancore's great Proclamation may be the beginning of the end, but it is not the end. If we remove the untouchability of Harijans, but treat Mussalmans or others as such, we have not removed the blot. "All land belongs to God" has a deeper meaning. Like the earth we, of it, also belong to God, and hence we must all feel like one and not erect boundary walls and issue prohibition decrees against one another.

This is the non-violent way in action. If we could fulfil this programme, there would be no need to offer civil disobedience, there would certainly be no need to do violence. Thirty-five crores of people conscious of their numerical strength as one man would be ashamed of doing violence to 70,000 white men in India, no matter how capable they are of dealing destruction and administering poison gas to millions in a moment. The charkha understood intelligently can spin not only economic salvation but can also revolutionize our minds and hearts and demonstrate to us that the non-violent approach to swaraj is the safest and the easiest. Though the progress may seem slow, it will prove quickest in the long run.

Believe me if Jawaharlal is not in jail today, it is not because he is afraid of it. He is quite capable of walking into prison doors as of mounting the gallows with a smile on his lips. I do not think I have lost the power or faith in the efficacy of such suffering. But there is no issue for it today as far as I can see. But what I feel is that all that suffering can be avoided if by united faith and will we achieve the constructive programme. If we can, I promise that we won't need to struggle with or against the British nation, but Lord Linlithgow will come to us and own that he was mistaken in his disbelief of our non-violence and truth and will undertake on behalf of his nation to abide by our decisions. Whether he does or not, I am working towards that and no other. "All belong to God."

Harijanbandhu, 3-1-1937, and *Harijan*, 2-1-1937

215. SPEECH AT CONGRESS SESSION

December 27, 1936

Mahatma Gandhi said that he expected that they would be tired by this time. He himself had nothing much to say. What he had to say he had already said in the morning at the exhibition. He did not want to repeat it. He was happy to see such a big assembly there, because the responsibility of bringing the Congress to a village was his. When the Reception Committee authorities came to him he told them certain things He told them to throw the responsibility on God and start work. There had been several criticisms against the step taken in holding the Congress in a village.

Several newspapers had criticized it and had dwelt upon the shortcomings. The Reception Committee did not have sufficient money.

Nevertheless they all saw that the Congress here was the same as before. In fact the village Congress had turned out to be a bigger one than previous Congresses. He had told the Reception Committee to be prepared for the needs of one lakh of people. During the flag salutation this morning alone, according to the estimate of some, two lakhs of people were present. Allowing for differences of estimate, he was sure there must have been at least one lakh of people. Such a large influx of people had made the Reception authorities fear whether they would be able to meet their needs.

Proceeding, Gandhiji paid a compliment to the 'Bhangis' and said that there were people among those who came to Faizpur who did what they should not do in the interests of sanitation. They no doubt had a hospital, but it was not big enough for a large number of people to be treated at once. He had in fact suggested that the Reception Committee should now ask people to begin to leave. He felt, however, that they should hereafter continue to hold the Congress in a village. They should take a vow there and then not to hold the Congress in towns in future. The drawbacks that they saw there could easily be obviated. There was no doubt in his mind that it would be very easy to hold the Congress in a village. By doing so the amount they spent could be considerably economized. But according to him even that amount was big enough.

He had wanted the Faizpur session to be completed within Rs. 5,000 but that was found to be not possible. They did not get sufficient support and they had to pay a big rent for ground. His idea was that no rent should be paid for the ground on which the Congress was held. The Reception Committee were also compelled to hold the Congress in Khandesh because they could not have got the same number of volunteers elsewhere. However, in spite of the impediments, the Reception Committee had carried on their work and though there was rain, they did not lose heart. If they really wanted to go into the villages and take the message of the Congress to the villagers they should take a vow to hold all future Congresses in villages.

Mahatma Gandhi said that villagers also would have to understand what the people who wanted to get swaraj wanted them to do. The President and the Socialists were saying: "You merely sleep after paying four annas. Mere payment of four annas does not show that you are real Congressmen."

Preparations for the Congress are not over in a day but they take a number of months. They have to go round and get things ready. This sort of connection that has been established should be continued all the year through. If you want this you must take a vow that you will hold future Congresses in villages.

The decision of the Constituent Assembly can be taken only when you have swaraj at your door. You can call a Constituent

Assembly when you have got full strength. It cannot meet in Delhi but in the remotest village. Swaraj can be got only by increasing our strength on all sides. If we increase that strength, we can see swaraj coming soon. What I asked you to do in 1920 still remains unaccomplished—charkha, prohibition and removal of untouchability. If you leave these things unaccomplished, hear an old man saying: You will have lost swaraj.

The Bombay Chronicle, 28-12-1936

216. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

December 28, 1936

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

If you finish today, as I hope you will, you will perhaps let me go away tomorrow after midday.

If you have appreciated my suggestion about holding the Congress in villages hereafter, I would like you to ask the Congress to revert to the old rule of holding it in between February and March. The sufferings of the thousands in wintry weather should be avoided if possible. Parliamentarians should fit in with this arrangement. There is no reason why, if the Congress secures a majority in the legislatures, they should not have vacation as they have during Xmas, Easter, etc. I have told Sarup[1] that land somewhere must be secured soon and then house-to-house collections started for Kamala memorial.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1936. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Also *A Bunch of Old Letters*, p. 214

[1] Vijayalakshmi Pandit

217. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

TILAKNAGAR,
December 28, 1936

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

After I wrote to you and before commencing silence, I had a little further talk with Kanti. His health cannot be said to be bad. You pray for him. But forget about seeing him. Whatever he had to get from you he has got.

You can come to Segaon on the 1st instead of the 3rd. Intimate the date to Mahadev so that the carriage may take you straight to Segaon from the station. If you want, you may stop at Maganwadi to see Kumarappa. You cannot go to Travancore with me. We shall think about the future at Segaon.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 371

218. MESSAGE TO RASHTRA BHASHA SAMMELAN, FAIZPUR

December 28, 1936[1]

I am sorry that it being my day of silence I may not speak today. I have no doubt in my mind that we must have a common language for intercommunication throughout India. And I have also no doubt that that language can only be Hindi, i.e., Hindustani. It is the language that is understood by the Hindus and Muslims alike in northern India. English can never take its place.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 10995

[1] The date is from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 30-12-1936, which also published the message.

219. *TALK TO CONGRESS WORKERS*[1]

[*December 29, 1936*][2]

I know the ordeals through which you have had to pass. Whether I congratulate you or not is going to make not the slightest difference. You all worked not for praise or reward but for the love of it, and such people do not need any congratulation. And how dare I congratulate those who are my peers in the service of the country? But I would ask of you one thing. I would ask every one of you to make a note of your experiences, especially the difficulties you had to contend against, and pass it on to Sardar Vallabhbhai and me. You must give me a detailed account of the way in which you gathered your material, the expenses, and your own failures and successes. They should prove very useful for future guidance. Sjt. Nandalal Bose ought to teach us a little of his art. You are all pioneers in this great experiment and your genius for organization has made it a success. This is a distinct step towards the attainment of swaraj by non-violent means, and it is a great thing that Maharashtra has led the way.

Harijan, 9-1-1937

220. *TALK TO CONGRESS VOLUNTEERS*

[*December 29, 1936*]

You are all mute servants, and you have earned the praise of everyone who has come here. I have been told that you were always quick to carry out orders, never to issue them, that you did not hesitate to do what are supposed to be meanest jobs. But that is the great merit of Maharashtra which has a very great number of selfless workers who have kept before themselves not the ideal to lead but to serve. If Tilak Maharaj taught us that swaraj is our birth-right, he also taught us that selfless service is the key to win it. Selfless service may have been in existence before Tilak Maharaj came, but he it was who systematized it. He

[1] This and the two items that follow have been extracted from Mahadev Desai's account "The Week at Faizpur–II".

[2] Gandhiji left Faizpur on this date.

began public life by pledging himself to work on a mere pittance, and ever since Maharashtra has had a galaxy of workers who have been content to work on a pittance. They do not need Rs. 75 or 100 a month like, for instance, workers in Gujarat, but Rs. 15 a month suffices for them. In some cases contact with Gujarat has spoilt them, but in the majority of cases they are still unspoilt. The credit for the noble way in which you volunteers have acquitted yourselves, therefore, belongs to the well-known workers who have set a great example. They are the pride and the honour of Maharashtra. May you all follow in their footsteps.

Harijan, 9-1-1937

221. *TALK TO CONGRESS VOLUNTEERS*[1]

[*December 29, 1936*]

Why should I congratulate you? You should thank me that I gave you this opportunity to atone for our sins. And congratulations too you will deserve when you fulfil the whole task. It is a noble profession, and one which our graduates and educated men might well turn to in order to earn their living. We have to reduce the thing to a science and to prepare treatises on sanitation. The ordinary Bhangi cannot do this. It is only educated Bhangis who can do this, and only those who will dedicate themselves to this work. That will also mean the end of untouchability which is as bad amongst the untouchables themselves as between them and the so-called touchables. Do not forget what you have learnt here. I would ask you to make it your duty wherever you are and wherever you go to be ministers of cleanliness. You did creditable work, but you might have done better. What about the villages in our vicinity like Faizpur, Khiroda and Savda? They are as filthy as ever. The Congress in future will have to be a permanently civilizing influence so far at least as sanitation is concerned, in the whole of the area where it is held. 'Bhangi' will then not be a name to be disliked or tolerated, but to be coveted. For 'Bhangi' will no more mean the doer of a dirty job, but a purifier and a disinfector, a preventor of disease and epidemics.

Harijan, 9-1-1937

[1] These were the voluntary Bhangis who had taken charge of the sanitation and scavenging department.

222. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
December 30, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

Send the enclosed telegram to Ramachandran. Give all the details to Raja.

Send me fruit if you have received any. Write to Anna that for the time being the visit to Travancore has been cancelled, so he should continue to send here the fruit received from Ambujam.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S N. 11514

223. LETTER TO GIJUBHAI BADHEKA

December 31, 1936

BHAI GIJUBHAI,

I have your letter. It will not be published. You write "I do not like parents to impose their wishes on the children and I would not prevent the children from behaving in the way they like." Will you call . . .[1] children? Will the parents give their own . . .[2] to children? If the children want to eat like gluttons or eat the things which are not worth eating or feel like jumping into the well or . . .[3] with the guests and want or actually ask for . . .[4]? Would you not disapprove of such activities? Ramdas still has such desires and I prevent him from satisfying them.

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1]to[4] Omissions as in the source

224. LETTER TO KASTURBHAI LALBHAI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 1, 1937

BHAISHRI KASTURBHAI,

I have your letter and a copy of your Award. Gulzarilal writes that Motilal Hirabhai Mill has come to an agreement with the Labour Association. Shouldn't we, therefore, withdraw its case from the Umpire? Please do so. If you send me the English translation of my Award, I will go through it. Meanwhile, if I get time, I myself will do the translation and send it. We will send whichever is ready earlier. If possible I will send it today, for while I am writing this it occurs to me that the translation should be sent to him without delay.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4201

225. DISCUSSION WITH KRZENSKI[1]

[January 2, 1937][2]

GANDHIJI: Do you therefore say that other religions are untrue?[3]

KRZENSKI: If others are convinced that their religions are true they are saved.

G. Therefore you will say that everyone would be saved even through untruth.

For you say that if a man really and sincerely believes in what is as a matter of fact untruth, he is saved. Would you not also hold, therefore, that your own way may be untrue

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter". Krzenski was a Polish professor of philosophy.

[2] From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary

[3] Krzenski had said that according to him Catholicism was the only true religion.

but that you are convinced that it is true and therefore you will be saved?

K. But I have studied all religions and have found that mine is the only true religion.

G. But so have others studied other religions. What about them? Well, I go further and tell you that religion is one and it has several branches which are all equal.

K. I accept that no religion lacks divine inspiration but all have not the same truth, because all have not the same light.

G. It is an essentially untrue position to take, for a seeker after truth, that he alone is in absolute possession of truth. What is happening to the poor astronomers today? They are changing their position every day, and there are scientists who impeach even Einstein's latest theory.

K. No. But I have examined the arguments in favour of other religions.

G. But it is an intellectual examination. You require different scales to weigh spiritual truths. Either we are all untrue—quite a logical position to take—but since truth does not come out of untruth it is better to say that we all have truth but not the complete truth. For God reveals His truth to instruments that are imperfect. Raindrops of purest distilled water become diluted or polluted as soon as they come in contact with mother earth. My submission is that your position is arrogant. But I suggest to you a better position. Accept all religions as equal, for all have the same root and the same laws of growth.

K. It is necessary to examine every religion philosophically and find out which is more harmonious, more perfect

G. That presupposes that all religions are in watertight compartments. That is wrong. They are always growing. Let us not limit God's function. He may reveal Himself in a thousand ways and a thousand times.

Now the professor switched on to the next question, viz, that of fighting materialism.

G. It is no use trying to fight these forces without giving up the idea of conversion, which I assure you is the deadliest poison that ever sapped the fountain of truth.

K. But I have a great respect for your religion.

G. Not enough. I had that feeling myself one day, but I found that it was not enough. Unless I accept the position that all religions are equal, and I have as much regard for other religions as I have for my own, I would not be able to live in the boiling war around me. Any make-believe combination of spiritual forces is doomed to failure if this fundamental position is not accepted. I read and get all my inspiration from the *Gita*. But I also read the Bible and the Koran to enrich my own religion. I incorporate all that is good in other religions.

K. That is your goodwill.

G. That is not enough.

K But I have great respect for you.

G. Not enough. If I were to join the Catholic Church you would have greater respect for me.

K. Oh yes, if you became a Catholic you would be as great as St. Francis.

G. But not otherwise? A Hindu cannot be a St. Francis? Poor Hindu!

K. But may I take your photograph?

G. No, surely you don't care for materialism! And it is all materialism, isn't it?

Harijan, 16-1-1937

226. LETTER TO LIONEL FIELDEN[1]

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 3, 1937

DEAR FIELDEN,

I welcome the confidence you have given me. My sympathies are with you in your troubles. But you have to take them philosophically if you must stick to the post[2] even though it be to the good of the country. Any attack on your personal character is a vile thing. But every society has its share of blackmailers. These you should laugh at. Then there are the critics. You must not expect informed criticism. Very few write for the public good; most write for money. Then there is the third class who don't come to you as you would have them do. They don't in spite of themselves. Those who know you would like to avail themselves of the facilities you may give them, but they know that the harm done by such co-operation will be greater than the good intended. Take Rajkumari herself. Even she could go only a certain distance and no further. You must not grieve over this but take it as inevitable in the circumstances surrounding us.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Incidents of Gandhiji's Life, p. 51

[1] Extracted from the addressee's article "You Must Not Grieve". The letter, he says, was in response to a sort of "last appeal" against attacks on him from the Government of India, the Congress and the Press.
[2] The addressee was the Director-General of the All India Radio.

227. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

January 3, 1937

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I wish I could have gone with you to Ajanta.

Before I received your letter, I had spoken strongly to Khan Saheb and urged him to send Mehrtaj to Vakil's school. But he was adamant. He does not want her to go to a mixed school. I spoke to Mehrtaj too. She is undoubtedly restless. But Khan Saheb is sanguine and believes that Mehrtaj will recover her usual cheerfulness.

I do hope you will take care of yourself and not wear yourself out.

I had a brief talk with Sarup over the memorial[1]. I am sure that before anything else, at least the ground must be acquired. There need be no insistence on having the plot you described to me or another near Anand Bhawan.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1937. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

228. LETTER TO SARASWATI

January 3, 1937

CHI. SARASWATI,[2]

Your letter. It seems I have not to come to Tr[3]. Just yet at any rate. Kanti could hardly come even if I have to go there. He was with me for three days at Faizpur.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat. G.N. 6158. Also C.W. 3431. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

[1] Kamala Nehru Memorial

[2] This and the subscription are in Hindi.

[3] Travancore; *vide* "Letter to Mahadev Desai", p. 201.

229. *LETTER TO KASTURBHAI LALBHAI*

January 3, 1937

BHAISHRI KASTURBHAI,

I have your letter. There are some errors in the translation that you have sent, and considerable liberty has been taken with the second part. If a copy can be got ready, you will get it with this letter.

The Umpire should not be given the trouble of coming here in his present delicate state of health. I will, therefore, keep myself ready to go to Poona. While sending him the translation of my Award, I have asked him to give the dates convenient to him.[1] Which dates will suit you? I have been delaying my going to Travancore. I can now cancel that programme and go to Poona on the 7th.

You will probably get this letter on the 5th. It will be good if you send me a wire immediately you get it.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4202

230. *LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 3, 1937

CHI. MAHADEV,

Enclosed are letters to Madgavkar and Kasturbhai. Send a copy of the translation to each of them. Keep one copy for me. Send one to Shankerlal. A letter[2] to him is also enclosed.

Agatha and Polak have not arrived till now, that is, 4 o'clock.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I read the letters; but personally I feel that we should not go.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11515

[1] This letter is not traceable.
[2] This is not traceable.

231. *LETTER TO THE HONY. SECRETARY, ALIGARH UNIVERSITY UNION*

January 4, 1937

DEAR FRIEND,

In spite of our differences in post-Khilafat days, I have nothing but pleasant memories of my association with Maulana Mohamed Ali whom I miss on so many difficult occasions. You cannot celebrate the 'Mohamed Ali Day' better than by all of you resolving to establish heart unity with Hindus. Brotherhood which Islam teaches is a mockery if it excludes people belonging to the other faiths.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

THE HONY. SECRETARY
MUSLIM UNIVERSITY UNION
ALIGARH, U. P.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

232. *LETTER TO G. V. GURJALE*

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 4, 1937

MY DEAR GURJALE,

I strongly advise you to take up some occupation and earn your bread and doing so keep one or two Harijan boys. Give up all ambitious schemes. Would you care to go to the Kodambakam Harijan Institute?

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1386

233. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

January 4, 1937

CHI. MAHADEV,

My memory is daily getting more confused. I did have a vague recollection that I had written to Duncan, but I dictated a letter to him since his letter was lying in the file. It was good that you remembered. My memory has gone but my laxity has not. I could have saved time and paper and myself from shame if I had noted down on the letter itself while replying to Duncan. "Crooked are all the limbs of a camel; how can they be kept hidden, do what one will?"

Akte, with a straight face denied four or five times his boorish conduct. But afterwards he felt remorse, confessed everything and repented of his conduct very much. However, he stuck to what he had said regarding Buva. The witness that he had produced also boldly stuck to his statement before Buva. My suspicion against Buva is deepening. He seems to be a very strange man. The letter to Pingle and the papers to be forwarded to him which I sent with Rajkumari will throw more light. But it is enough that you know. Don't spend time in reading the papers. You can tell all this to J.

Agatha didn't speak at all yesterday. Polak asked one or two questions in public. The rest of the time was spent on titbits. Fortunately Polak and others came very late: at 4.30. You haven't, therefore, missed anything. Polak's talk was private and as such it cannot be reported. I am going to make you laugh when we meet. Dinkar's talk means a speech. I will tell you about that also some time. Agatha has come today. But she can't even look at me. Tomorrow she will come for a talk. You also may come and spend the day here. Durga and Bablo also may come if they want to.

BAPU

[PS.]

Send today's mail with Rajkumari.

Write to Burbage and tell him that I have referred to his letter in *Harijan*. Send him a copy also.

I will break my silence late at 9.45. If, therefore, the students wish to have a talk with me, they can do so only tomorrow.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11516

234. NOTE OF INTRODUCTION TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

SEGAON,
January 4, 1937

Shri Narahari Dwarkadas Parikh is one of the inmates of the Satyagraha Ashram. At present he is Registrar of the Gujarat Vidyapith and manager of the Harijan Ashram. He is also Secretary of the Goseva Sangh. He is going on a tour of Kathiawar to discuss with the States there suggestions for the preservation and improvement of the cow and her progeny. I hope that the States and their officers will listen to his suggestions and will implement them to the extent possible. That will prevent in some measure the destruction of the cattle wealth that is taking place today.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9103

235. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

January 4, 1937

CHI. NARAHARI,

The note[1] you asked for is enclosed. Isn't this what you wanted? That booklet is lying on the shelf here unused.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9102

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

236. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

January 4, 1937

BHAI BAPA,

I have been eager to go to Travancore, but I am not enthusiastic about it any more. I am convinced that C. P.[1] does not want my presence there. In reply to a straight question by me, he tells me that their work there is going on very well, that they don't need anybody's help, but that if I still want to go I shall be welcome and should wire him when I start. The agitation in Cochin goes on. Rajaji says I must not go there. My going there at such a juncture is likely to harm the cause. All the same I have asked the Dewan to send me a telegram. If it comes, I will go. I have also written to Ramachandran to consult Rajaji. Do you wish anything more than this? I will read the book you have sent. I will try to find Rajaji's article.

Meanwhile the talks I am conducting are going on. If we have the spirit in us, everything will be well. If we have lost our spirit, then it is better for us to be destroyed. I console myself thus and go on doing my duty to the best of my ability without worrying about the result.

Vandemataram from
BAPU

[PS.]

While I write this Amtul Salaam is sewing, seated beside me.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1174

237. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

[January 6, 1937][2]

CHI. MAHADEV,

Amtul Salaam is going there. She is leaving with us and going to Bombay. These days I am inundated with news about people's impurity. Send a telegram to Madgavkar as follows:

[1] C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, Dewan of Travancore

[2] Gandhiji reached Poona on January 7 to meet G. D Madgavkar, the Umpire in the Ahmedabad Mills wage dispute.

"Thanks. Reaching Tomorrow."[1] Mention the time also. Send a similar one to Premlilabehn. Then one to Dewan, Morvi: "Hear Maharaja seriously ill. Hope he is recovering—Gandhi."[2]

More when we meet.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11561

238. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

PARNAKUTI,
POONA,
January 8, 1937

MY DEAR IDIOT,

You are straining every nerve to deserve the title. What a scene on Thursday over a most trifling thing! And that too after assuring me that you were indifferent to such things. However, let the past be buried.

This is merely to inform you that Ramachandran wires you and Khan Saheb could go with me. I do not want to bank on that wire. I expect confirmation from C. P.

I hope you had a good journey and that you have no trouble. Do please observe the dietetic rules.

Love.

TYRANT

[PS.]

Please remember me to Mrs. Swaminathan.

SHRI RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
C/O SHRI AMMU SWAMINATHAN
GILCHRIST GARDENS
CHETPUT
MADRAS

From the original: C.W. 3762. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6918

[1]&[2] The drafts of the telegrams are in English.

239. LETTER TO S. AMBUJAMMAL

January 8, 1937

CHI. AMBUJAM,[1]

I am reaching Madras from Poona on Monday evening. I am supposed to drive straight to Mambalam. Of course you and Janammal will be there. Hope Father is well and you are at peace with yourself.

Love.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the original Ambujammal Papers Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

240. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAMDAS THAKURDAS

January 8, 1937

BHAISHRI PURUSHOTTAM

You may continue to write in English by all means, but permit me to write in Gujarati. Teach your assistant to read my handwriting. I don't want you to waste your time in doing so. Just as you are conscious of the value of my time, I am conscious of that of yours. I also know that my handwriting is not easy to read.

How can I disregard your request? But you know that I don't accept any responsibility in a casual manner. I agree to be the president of a meeting only when I have control over its proceedings and have faith in it. Perhaps you do not know how much I contributed to the formation of the Association[2] and to carrying on through it the agitation against the indenture system. Probably Natarajan is acquainted with the history of it. Vaze was not there at that time.

I am aware of the great injustice about to be done to the Zanzibar Indians. But that injustice cannot be prevented by

[1] The superscription and subscription are in Hindi.

[2] British Indian Association of the Transvaal

one meeting or by my presiding over it. Before that I myself should do something. I should enter into correspondence with the Government, study the Binder Report, see a representative of Zanzibar if there is any here. Our people there are divided just as they are here and are selfish and lethargic. If we cannot get them to do any work, then also we will not succeed. How can all this be done? Where am I to find the necessary time? "Better one's own duty, bereft of merit, than another's well-performed; better death in the dicharge of one's duty, another's duty is fraught with danger."[1] For me at present the work about overseas Indians is another's duty. Why do you involve me in it? Nothing will be achieved by my becoming the president. Please don't dismiss my argument as advanced by an impractical man. If you find it convincing I ask you to spare me if you can. Then I shall not be guilty of disregarding your request.

If, however, you cannot swallow my argument, send me the Binder Report and explain to me whatever you feel it is necessary to explain. If there is anybody who knows all the facts send him to explain them to me. If you can spare the time and wish to come, you may do so. I have to leave this place for Travancore on the 10th evening. You will get this tomorrow, that is, Saturday. If you or your representative can come the same day, I can give one hour in the evening. Perhaps even on Sunday I may be able to give one hour. It depends on Sir Govindrao how much time I can spare on Sunday.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]

Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

241. RIGHT TO LIVE

A correspondent from Greenville, S.C., U.S.A., writes enclosing a clipping from an American newspaper:[2]

[1] *Bhagavad Gita,* III. 35

[2] The letter is not reproduced here. The correspondent had expressed his disbelief in the newspaper report of Gandhiji's views concerning killing of flies and mosquitoes and said if Gandhiji would disavow "such nonsense" he would have the disavowal placed in all the newspapers of America.

The clipping contains an account of my illness of last year and ends.

> The recently powerful spokesman, Gandhi, flying in the face of all modern scientific knowledge and ignoring the tremendous number of human beings slain by such small insects, is reported as having stated in *The Times of India*, June 1935: "We have no right to take the lives of mosquitoes, flies, lice, rats or fleas. They have as much right to live as we."

I am afraid my correspondent cannot have the pleasure of espousing my cause in the manner he proposes. For I did make the statement attributed to me, though I qualified it by saying that in the present state of modern ignorance, and especially my own ignorance, I did countenance campaigns of killing rats, fleas, mosquitoes and the like. But I do believe that all God's creatures have the right to live as much as we have. Instead of prescribing the killing of the so-called injurious fellow-creatures of ours as a duty, if men of knowledge had devoted their gift to discovering ways of dealing with them otherwise than by killing them, we would be living in a world befitting our status as men—animals endowed with reason and the power of choosing between good and evil, right and wrong, violence and non-violence, truth and untruth. I prefer to be called a coward or a fool or worse, to denying for the sake of being considered a wise man what I believe to be a fundamental truth of life. Marvellous as the progress of physical sciences undoubtedly is, it only humbles us and enables us to know that we know hardly anything of the mysteries of Nature. In the spiritual realm, we make little or no progress. The physical has overwhelmed the spiritual in us. We hardly like to own the latter's existence. And yet the question of killing and non-killing, of man's relation to his human[1] fellow creatures, belongs to the spiritual realm. Its proper solution will surely revolutionize our thoughts, speech and action. Both my intellect and heart refuse to believe that the so-called noxious life has been created for destruction by man. God is good and wise. A good and wise God cannot be so bad and so unwise as to create to no purpose. It is more conducive to reason to own our ignorance and assume that every form of life has a useful purpose which we must patiently strive to discover. I verily believe that man's habit of killing man on the slightest pretext has darkened his reason and he gives himself liberties with other life which he would shudder

[1] This should be "sub-human"; *vide* pp. 252-3.

to take if he really believed that God is a God of Love and Mercy. Anyway, though for fear of death I may kill tigers, snakes, fleas, mosquitoes and the like, I ever pray for illumination that will shed all fear of death and, thus refusing to take life, know the better way for

"Taught by the Power that pities me
I learn to pity them."

Harijan, 9-1-1937

242. HOW TO UTILIZE ELECTIONS

It was stated in Faizpur during the Congress Week that there are nearly 3½ crores of voters who will vote for candidates for the provincial legislatures. Harijan workers can utilize the occasion of the elections for educating the voters on the question of untouchability and of committing the candidates definitely to one side or the other. They can be asked for instance these questions:

Are you in favour of complete removal of untouchability? Are you in favour of removing the legal bar on the grounds of custom and legislation permitting temple authorities to open temples to Harijans where *savarna* Hindu opinion is ripe for the step? Are you in favour of enforcing the common law in the matter of Harijans freely using public wells, schools, and the like?

A correspondent writes to say that there is a conspiracy of silence among candidates on this question. If there is, it can be broken by energetic Harijan workers simply putting at voters' meetings questions like those I have suggested. Enlightened voters interested in the purification of Hinduism can do a great deal to educate and mould public opinion in this matter. It is a pity that the question of untouchability can at all become an issue between rival candidates or between candidates and electors. But pity or no pity, we have to face the facts as they are today.

Harijan, 9-1-1937

243. 'A HUMBLE VILLAGER OF BIRBHUM'

'A Humble Villager of Birbhum' living in Santiniketan sends me through Deenabandhu Andrews the following questions:

1. What is an ideal Indian village in your esteemed opinion and how far is it practicable to reconstruct a village on the basis of an 'Ideal Village' in the present social and political situation of India?
2. Which of the village problems should a worker try to solve first of all and how should he proceed?
3. What should be the special theme of village exhibitions and museums in a miniature form? How should such exhibitions be best utilized for the reconstruction of villages?

1. An ideal Indian village will be so constructed as to lend itself to perfect sanitation. It will have cottages with sufficient light and ventilation built of a material obtainable within a radius of five miles of it. The cottages will have courtyards enabling householders to plant vegetables for domestic use and to house their cattle. The village lanes and streets will be free of all avoidable dust. It will have wells according to its needs and accessible to all. It will have houses of worship for all; also a common meeting place, a village common for grazing its cattle, a co-operative dairy, primary and secondary schools in which industrial education will be the central fact, and it will have panchayats for settling disputes. It will produce its own grains, vegetables and fruit, and its own khadi. This is roughly my idea of a model village. In the present circumstances its cottages will remain what they are with slight improvements. Given a good zamindar, where there is one, or co-operation among the people, almost the whole of the programme other than model cottages can be worked out at an expenditure within the means of the villagers including the zamindar or zamindars, without Government assistance. With that assistance there is no limit to the possibility of village reconstruction. But my task just now is to discover what the villagers can do to help themselves if they have mutual co-operation and contribute voluntary labour for the common good. I am convinced that they can, under intelligent guidance, double the village income as distinguished

from individual income. There are in our villages inexhaustible resources not for commercial purposes in every case but certainly for local purposes in almost every case. The greatest tragedy is the hopeless unwillingness of the villagers to better their lot.

2. The very first problem the village worker will solve is its sanitation. It is the most neglected of all the problems that baffle workers and that undermine physical well-being and breed disease. If the worker became a voluntary Bhangi, he would begin by collecting night-soil and turning it into manure and sweeping village streets. He will tell people how and where they should perform daily functions and speak to them on the value of sanitation and the great injury caused by the neglect. The worker will continue to do the work whether the villagers listen to him or no.

3. The spinning-wheel should be the central theme of all such village exhibitions and the industries suited to the particular locality should revolve round it. An exhibition thus arranged would naturally become an object-lesson for the villagers and an educational treat when it is accompanied by demonstrations, lectures and leaflets.

Harijan, 9-1-1937

244. *NOTES*

THE COW AND THE HARIJAN

In my conversations with Dr. Mott, at one stage of it I said, "Would you preach the Gospel to a cow? Well, some of the untouchables are worse than cows in understanding. I mean they no more distinguish between the relative merits of Islam and Hinduism and Christianity than a cow."[1] Some Missionary friends have taken exception to the analogy. I have no remorse about the propriety of the analogy. There could be no offence meant to Harijans because the cow is a sacred animal. I worship her as I worship my mother. Both are givers of milk. And so far as understanding is concerned I do maintain that there are, be it said to the discredit of superior-class Hindus, thousands of Harijans who can no more understand the merits and demerits of different religions than a cow. That after a long course of training Harijans can have their intelligence developed in a manner a cow's cannot, is irrelevant to the present discussion.

[1] *Vide* p. 37.

A Student's Difficulty

A student asks:

> What should a matriculate or an undergraduate who is unfortunately father of two or three children do in order to procure a living wage, and what should he do when he is forced to marry against his will and before even the age of twenty-five?

The simplest answer that occurs to me is that a student who does not know how to support his wife and children or who marries against his will has studied to no purpose. But that is past history for him. The perplexed student deserves a helpful answer. He does not say what is his requirement. If he does not pitch it high because he is a matriculate and will put himself on a level with the ordinary labourer, he should have no difficulty in earning a livelihood. His intelligence should help his hands and feet and enable him to do better than the labourer who has not had the opportunity of developing his intelligence. This is not to say that a labourer who has never learnt English is devoid of intelligence. Unfortunately labour has never been helped to develop the mind, and those who pass through schools do have their minds opened even though under a handicap not to be found in any other part of the world. Even this mental equipment is counterbalanced by false notions of dignity inculcated during school and college days. And so students think that they can earn their living only at the desk. The inquirer has therefore to realize the dignity of labour and seek the maintenance of himself and his family in that field.

And there is no reason why his wife should not add to the family income by utilizing her spare hours. Similarly if the children are at all able to do any work, they too should be inspanned for productive work. The utterly false idea that intelligence can be developed only through book-reading should give place to the truth that the quickest development of the mind can be achieved by artisan's work being learnt in a scientific manner. True development of the mind commences immediately the apprentice is taught at every step why a particular manipulation of the hand or a tool is required. The problem of the unemployment of students can be solved without difficulty if they will rank themselves among the common labourers.

As for marriage against one's will, all I can say is that students should develop sufficient strength of purpose to resist any marriage that is sought to be forced on them. Students should learn the art of standing alone and resisting in every legitimate

manner any attempt to force them to do anything against their will, much more so to marry against their will.

Harijan, 9-1-1937

245. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

POONA,
January 9, 1937

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Yesterday I received another wire from R.[1] saying you and K.[2] should not accompany me. But I do still expect to hear directly from C. P. saying "yes". However, we must be ready for either event.

The weather here is good—but not so bracing as at Segaon.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3763. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6919

246. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

January 9, 1937

CHI. MIRA,

I must rest the right hand. No time left here for much writing. I hope you are now quite well and happy in mind. There was a basket of fruit lying in Maganwadi when I reached there. You must have received it. Anyway you will see to it that you, Balkrishna and others who need fruit have a regular supply.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Has Kanu taken up spinning?

From the original: C.W. 6372. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9838

[1]&[2] Ramachandran and Khan Saheb; *vide* p. 212.

247. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

January 9, 1937

CHI. MUNNALAL,

This time you will have to get a certificate from Mirabehn. Supervise the scavenging work. Take Mirabehn with you. Wash her clothes, etc., when necessary.

I am not writing a separate letter to Balwantsinha.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8590. Also C.W. 7007. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

248. LETTER TO JAI SINGH

[Before *January 10, 1937*][1]

If Sikhism is a part of Hindu culture, as I believe it is, what is the meaning of change of faith and name? If Sikhism is not part and product of Hinduism you are simply creating a conflict among the Harijans without achieving any noble purpose.

The Bombay Chronicle, 12-1-1937

249. INTERVIEW TO PROF. MAYS[2]

[Before *January 10, 1937*][3]

GANDHIJI: Passive resistance is a misnomer for non-violent resistance. It is much more active than violent resistance. It is direct, ceaseless, but three-fourths invisible and only one-fourth visible. In its visibility it seems to be ineffecttive, e.g., the spinning-wheel which I have called the symbol of non-violence. In its visibility it appears ineffective, but it is really intensely active and most effective in ultimate result. This knowledge enables

[1] The report in the source is dated January 10.

[2] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "A Discourse on Non-violence". Prof. Mays was an American Negro who had come to India along with Dr. Tobias to attend the World's Meeting of the Committees of Y.M.C A.

[3] According to Mahadev Desai, this interview took place before the meeting with Dr. Tobias; *vide* "Interview to Dr. Tobias", pp. 229-30.

me to detect flaws in the way in which the votaries of non-violence are doing their spinning. I ask for more vigilance and more untiredness. Non-violence is an intensely active force when properly understood and used. A violent man's activity is most visible while it lasts. But it is always transitory. What can be more visible than the Abyssinians done to death by Italians? There it was lesser violence pitted against much greater. But if the Abyssinians had retired from the field and allowed themselves to be slaughtered, their seeming inactivity would have been much more effective though not for the moment visible. Hitler and Mussolini on the one hand and Stalin on the other are able to show the immediate effectiveness of violence. But it will be as transitory as that of Jhenghis's slaughter. But the effects of Buddha's non-violent action persist and are likely to grow with age. And the more it is practised, the more effective and inexhaustible it becomes, and ultimately the whole world stands agape and exclaims, 'a miracle has happened.' All miracles are due to the silent and effective working of invisible forces. Non-violence is the most invisible and the most effective.

PROF. MAYS I have no doubt in my mind about the superiority of non-violence but the thing that bothers me is about its exercise on a large scale, the difficulty of so disciplining the mass mind on the point of love It is easier to discipline individuals. What should be the strategy when they break out? Do we retreat or do we go on?

GANDHIJI: I have had that experience in the course of our movement here. People do not gain the training by preaching. Non-violence cannot be preached. It has to be practised. The practice of violence can be taught to people by outward symbols. You shoot at boards, then at targets, then at beasts. Then you are passed as an expert in the art of destruction. The non-violent man has no outward weapon and, therefore, not only his speech but his action also seems ineffective. I may say all kinds of sweet words to you without meaning them. On the other hand I may have real love in me and yet my outward expression may be forbidding. Then outwardly my action in both cases may be the same and yet the effect may be different. For the effect of our action is often more potent when it is not patently known. Thus the unconscious effect you are making on me I may never know. It is, nevertheless, infinitely greater than the conscious effect. In violence there is nothing invisible. Non-violence, on the other hand, is three-fourths invisible, so the effect is in the inverse ratio to its invisibility.

Non-violence, when it becomes active, travels with extraordinary velocity, and then it becomes a miracle. So the mass mind is affected first unconsciously, then consciously. When it becomes consciously affected there is demonstrable victory. In my own experience, when people seemed to be weakening there was no consciousness of defeat in me. Thus I was fuller of hope in the efficacy of non-violence after the renunciation of Civil Disobedience in 1922, and today I continue to be in the same hopeful mood. It is not a mere emotional-thing. Supposing I saw no signs of dawn coming I should not lose faith. Everything has to come in its proper time.

I have discussions here with my co-workers about the scavenging work we are doing. 'Why can't we do it after swaraj?' they say. 'We may do it bettter after swaraj.' I say to them, 'No. The reform has to come today, it must not wait for swaraj; in fact the right type of swaraj will come only out of such work.' Now I cannot show you, as perhaps I cannot show some of my co-workers, the connection between swaraj and scavenging. If I have to win swaraj non-violently I must discipline my people. The maimed and the blind and the leprous cannot join the army of violence. There is also an age-limit for serving in the army. For a non-violent struggle there is no age-limit; the blind and the maimed and the bed-ridden may serve, and not only men but women also. When the spirit of non-violence pervades the people and actually begins to work, its effect is visible to all.

But now comes your poser. There are people, you say, who do not believe in non-violence as you do. Are you to sit quiet? The friends ask: 'If not now, when will you act?' I say in reply: 'I may not succeed in my lifetime, but my faith that victory can only come through non-violence is stronger than ever. When I spoke on the cult of the spinning-wheel at Faizpur, a newspaper correspondent imputed astuteness to me. Nothing could be further from my mind. When I came to Segaon I was told the people might not co-operate and might even boycott me. I said: 'That may be. But this is the way non-violence works. If I go to a village which is still farther off, the experiment may work better. This thing has come in my search after the technique of non-violence. And each day that passes makes my faith brighter. I have come here to bring that faith to fruition and to die in the process if that is God's will. Non-violence to be worth anything has to work in the face of hostile forces. But there may be action in inaction. And action may be worse than inaction.

PROF. MAYS. Is it ever possible to administer violence in a spirit of love?

G. No. Never. I shall give you an illustration from my own experiment. A calf was lame and had developed terrible sores; he could not eat and breathed with difficulty. After three days' argument with myself and my co-workers I put an end to its life.[1] Now that action was non-violent because it was wholly unselfish, inasmuch as the sole purpose was to achieve the calf's relief from pain. Some people have called this an act of violence. I have called it a surgical operation. I should do exactly the same thing with my child, if he were in the same predicament. My point is that non-violence as the supreme law of our being ceases to be such the moment you talk of exceptions.

PROF. MAYS: How is a minority to act against an overwhelming majority?

G. I would say that a minority can do much more in the way of non-violence than a majority. I had an English friend called Symonds. He used to say: 'I am with you so long as you are in a minority. After you are in a majority we are quits.' I had less diffidence in handling my minority in South Africa than I had here in handling a majority. But it would be wholly wrong therefore to say that non-violence is a weapon of the weak. The use of non-violence requires greater bravery than that of violence. When Daniel defied the laws of the Meads and Persians, his action was non-violent.

PROF. MAYS: Should the thought of consequences that might accrue to the enemy as a result of your non-violence at all constrain you?

G. Certainly. You may have to suspend your movement as I did in South Africa when the Government was faced with the revolt of European labour. The latter asked me to make common cause with them. I said 'no'.

PROF. MAYS: And non-violence will never rebound on you, whereas violence will be self-destroyed?

G. Yes. Violence must beget violence. But let me tell you that here too my argument has been countered by a great man who said: 'Look at the history of non-violence. Jesus died on the Cross, but his followers shed blood.' This proves nothing. We have no data before us to pass judgment. We do not know the

[1] For a fuller account of the episode, *vide* Vol. XXXVII, pp. 310-5.

whole of the life of Jesus. The followers perhaps had not imbibed fully the message of non-violence. But I must warn you against carrying the impression with you that mine is the final word on non-violence. I know my own limitations. I am but a humble seeker after truth. And all I claim is that every experiment of mine has deepened my faith in non-violence as the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. Its use is not restricted to individuals merely but it can be practised on a mass scale.

Harijan, 20-3-1937

250. *THE NEXT CONGRESS SESSION*

Perhaps at the moment it is too early and not proper to write anything about the next Congress session. This, however, holds good only if one wishes to write about political matters, that is because politics is constantly changing. But I wish to write about the manner in which a rural session of the Congress should be held. That is a subject which may be discussed at any time, and preparations should begin from today.

There is no doubt that the success of the Faizpur Congress has surpassed everyone's expectations. Despite this, the unavoidable drawbacks from which it suffered should and can be remedied in the future. No one can be held responsible for some of the things which were found at Faizpur. No one had expected people would come in such large numbers. At no other session of the Congress were volunteers made to work as hard as at this session. Hence, it may be said that at Faizpur, the ship of the Congress had to be steered through an uncharted sea. I give below a few improvements which I feel are necessary as a result of my experiences at Faizpur.

1. It does not matter how small the village is. It should not be more than seven miles from the nearest railway station.

2. The necessary site should be obtained free.

3. The village must co-operate.

4. The soil should not be black as at Faizpur, but sandy, capable of soaking up water quickly.

5. Water should be provided in sufficient quantity and at various places.

6. There should be an adequate number of latrines and urinals at various convenient spots.

7. At various places, posters in Gujarati, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu and other languages, written in a bold hand, should

be put up, saying: "Please use for latrines and urinals only the places provided." The roads should bear names or numbers, preferably the latter. Bhangi volunteers should be in attendance on all the roads. They should have a map of the Congress Nagar and should constantly guide the visitors. They should also have brooms, buckets and small shovels. If anyone urinates or defecates outside the urinals or latrines these volunteers should warn him, and remove the filth immediately and dispose of it. A Bhangi should be in attendance at each urinal and latrine, whose duty should be to clean these up after they have been used. Buckets and shovels made of tin may serve the purpose. These are inexpensive and may be used even later. If shovels are shaped like winnows they would be cheap and easy to use.

8. There must be a good and well-built hospital attached to the Congress Nagar. It is necessary that it should have walls of unbaked bricks and a tiled roof. It should accommodate at least twenty beds with a separate wing for women.

9. There should not be one but several kitchens. Things should become much easier if selected cooks are engaged. It would facilitate matters to have blocks which would accommodate a hundred persons each for meals. There should be separate charges for those who have their meals in the blocks and those who prefer to carry their meals away. The menu should be simple and such as to suit all the provinces. It is necessary to abandon the temptation to serve meals to a large number of people in one place. Everyone must have his meal served in his own utensils. It is never possible to make arrangements for serving thousands of people at any one place at the same time.

10. At Faizpur, it was practically impossible to procure cow's milk and cow's ghee. I think that even from the economic point of view, at Congress gatherings, if not elsewhere, we must make it a rule to use only cow's milk. It is no simple matter to provide cow's milk to thousands of persons. This task can be accomplished if preparations are taken in hand right from today.

11. Flour, rice, etc., must be ground and pounded in the Congress Nagar itself.

12. The Faizpur exhibition, to my mind, was the best held so far. Its success was clearly evident and yet there is scope for improvement.

These are the principal points which occur to me at the moment. Two changes seem to be necessary. Under the new constitution, the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. meet before the Congress session. Taking advantage of this, other meetings are

also held before the opening session of the Congress. This is not proper. It puts an unnecessary burden on the Reception Committee and lengthens the period of the session from three to ten days. Either all meetings before the Congress session should be stopped or preparations should be made beforehand for a rush of people lasting ten days.

And if the Congress is to meet in a village only, it should not meet in December. There is very little substance in the plea that the Congress session must be held towards the end of December because railway fare concessions are available during Christmas week and the Assembly has a holiday. There is a much stronger case for holding the Congress session after the winter is over, for it suits the convenience of the lakhs of people who attend it. I feel that the inconvenience suffered by people in winter, farmers being busy with the harvest in December and the difficulty of getting a large area of open ground on account of the standing crops are three difficulties which cancel out the two advantages. I believe that the number of persons who came to Faizpur on foot from surrounding areas far exceeded the number who spent money on railway fare to come there. Religious fairs such as Kumbh, Magh, etc., are not regulated by such considerations as railway fare concessions. Regardless of whether these are available or not, these fairs are held at the appointed time and are attended by millions. The Congress session should not be a lesser attraction than these.

[From Gujarati]
Harijanbandhu, 10-1-1937

251. VAGUE LANGUAGE

A gentleman who is a careful reader of *Harijanbandhu* likes my article "Hindu Code of Conduct"[1] in its issue of December 27, but he is not satisfied with clause 14 therein. That clause is as follows:

> We certainly would not like anyone to abuse us or beat us or misbehave with our mother or sisters. Hence, we should not abuse anyone, not even our wives and children.

Many of the clauses of this article are interrelated. Clause 14 has a bearing on clauses 15, 16 and 17. If read along with these clauses the implication of clause 14 becomes clear. Despite

[1] *Vide* pp. 185-9.

this, I must admit that one is likely to get confused if one reads clause 14 by itself. I regard its language as vague and inelegant. On rereading it I find that its clarity of meaning is lost because I have overburdened it. Clauses 15, 16 and 17 have been written to clarify what is contained in clause 14. In order to relieve the burden on clause 14 and for the sake of clarity of thought and language, I write clauses 14, 15 and 17 as follows. There is no scope for improvement in clause 16.

14. If anyone abused us or beat us, we would not like it. Why then should we abuse others or beat them?

15. We cannot abuse our wives and children if we do not abuse others. Many men regard their wives and children as their property. This is a grave error. In our religion, the wife has been regarded as the equal of the husband. It is for this reason that she is known as *ardhangini* and also as *sahadharmini*. She is addressed as *devi*[1]. Parents are the protectors of the children. Hence they should be gentle, tolerant, and patient towards them also.

17. We shall not tolerate anyone misbehaving with our wife or mother or sister. How then can we misbehave with anyone else's wife? To cast a lustful glance at a woman, to pass obscene remarks about her, to touch her with wicked intention—all this would be regarded as misconduct. All women except one's wife are one's mothers and sisters.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 10-1-1937

252. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

POONA,
January 10, 1937

CHI. MIRA,

Your two letters came together. They were enough to make me weep. How can I console you? If you cannot have your peace there you can certainly go to Varoda or Wardha and pass the few days usefully. I have no other Manager to appoint. I have to be satisfied with Munnalal so long as I consider him to be a clean man. The noise is there in my absence but no more than is observable in an Indian home. You can remedy these things, if you can be calm within and treat these noises as also abuses to be remedied. We do not become impatient over ravings of

[1] Goddess

maniacs. For we treat them as diseases to be tolerated till they are remedied. Why can't you treat the aberrations of the Segaon home in exactly the same light?

I am, I hope, not leaving Segaon again quite so soon. Belgaum is there. But that is in April.

I hope your foot is all right. If not you should go to Wardha and show it to the C. S. The post should be sent for daily.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C W. 6371. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9837

253. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

January 10, 1937

CHI. MAHADEV,

Hakimji is arriving there today. His remedies are not inhuman, but are such as the poor can afford and tolerate. I would advise you to consult him for Durga. We may not carry out his treatment if we don't want to. The remedies prescribed by Mehta and Gaurishankar are royal. This is a hakim for the poor and a godly man. I am training him and don't intend to let him go away soon.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11517

254. INTERVIEW TO DR. TOBIAS[1]

[*January 10, 1937*][2]

DR. TOBIAS: Your doctrine of non-violence has profoundly influenced my life. Do you believe in it as strongly as ever?

GANDHIJI: I do indeed. My faith in it is growing.

Negroes in U.S A.—12 million—are struggling to obtain such fundamental rights as freedom from mob violence, unrestricted use of the ballot,

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "A Discourse on Non-violence". Dr. Tobias, an American Negro, had come to India to attend the World's Meeting of the Committees of the Y.M.C A As the interview took place on a silence day, Gandhiji gave written answers.

[2] The date is from the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary.

freedom from segregation, etc. Have you, out of your struggle in India, a word of advice and encouragement to give us?

I had to contend against some such thing, though on a much smaller scale, in South Africa. The difficulties are not yet over. All I can say is that there is no other way than the way of non-violence, a way, however, not of the weak and ignorant but of the strong and wise.

Travancore indicates that your full identification with the untouchables is bearing fruit.[1] Do you think Travancore's example will be followed by other States in the near future?

I shall be surprised if it is not.

What word shall I give my Negro brethren as to the outlook for the future?

With right which is on their side and the choice of non-violence as their only weapon, if they will make it such, a bright future is assured.

Harijan, 20-3-1937

255. LETTER TO MUTHULAKSHMI REDDY

January 11, 1937

DEAR SISTER,

I am writing this in a moving train. I am taking no part or interest in the elections.[2] But I agree with you that women should be treated on a par with men. I go further, where they are equal in ability they should be preferred. I do not know what has happened in your case but you are in safe hands. Both Pandit Jawaharlal and Sardar Patel would not be party to favouritism. Unconscious injustice is sometimes inevitable in human institutions.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] The reference is to the Proclamation throwing open all State temples to Harijans.

[2] The first general elections to the Provincial Assemblies under the Government of India Act, 1935, were scheduled for February 1937.

256. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

ON WAY TO MADRAS,
January 11, 1937

CHI. KANTI,

Since I am writing to Gokulbhai,[1] I felt like writing to you also. Prabhavati says that to save stamps and for other reasons you will practically stop writing to me now. What is this? You seem to have become careless as ever about your health. I think you are making a great mistake in doing this. Even if you make great progress in your study but ruin your health in the process, what profit will you derive from such study?

Do continue to write to me regularly and in detail. I will expect a letter from you in Trivandrum. I may have to spend nine days in Travancore.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7311. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

257. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAMDAS THAKURDAS

ON WAY TO MADRAS,
January 11, 1937

BHAISHRI PURUSHOTTAMDAS,

I had a talk with Vaze and read the papers. He agreed that I should not involve myself in this business and has undertaken to plead with you and to leave me out. I hope that he has succeeded. To prepare myself for this task, I should read many other papers and do some other preparatory work too. How can I manage it? Where is the time? If I take up that task I must change the direction of my activities altogether. According to my nature I cannot approach such work in any other manner. I hope you will understand this and willingly leave me out of it. I would really like to help in this work but I am completely helpless.[2]

[1] This letter to Gokulbhai is not traceable.
[2] *Vide* also pp. 213-4.

I am writing this in a moving train.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]

Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

258. *LETTER TO INDU N. PAREKH*

ON WAY TO TRIVANDRUM,
January 11, 1937

CHI. INDU,

I remember only your last letter. I can reply to it only now, in a moving train. Of course you have my blessings on your birthday. I do see your restlessness. Everything will be all right if you do not fall into bad company and if you stick to your study. Do not conceal your thoughts and desires and do nothing secretly. Your mind will then automatically become steady.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G N 6255

259. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

ON THE TRAIN,
January 12, 1937

CHI. MIRA,

I am writing this on the train taking me to Trivandrum. I have been brooding over your two letters. I was inclined to send you a wire yesterday and also today. But I restrained myself. I hope to hear from you on reaching Travancore. I hope your foot is all right and that so is your mental condition. I do not want to argue with you. I therefore simply pray for you. How I wish God will give you peace and joy not to be affected by any event however untoward it may appear to be. Prabhavati joined me at Poona and Rajkumari at Madras.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C W 6373. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9839

260. SPEECH AT CIVIC RECEPTION, TRIVANDRUM[1]

January 12, 1937

As you have in your address very properly said, this is not my first visit to Travancore or its capital Trivandrum. Every time I have come to Travancore, I have come almost as a crusader trying to wean *savarna* Hindus from the curse of untouchability. I have had many occasions to address *savarna* Hindus and *avarna* Hindus, miscalled untouchables or depressed classes, also on this subject. This time, however, I have come as a humble pilgrim to tender my congratulations to H.H. the Maharaja and his good mother Her Highness the Maharani and his able Dewan. With the co-operation of this trinity, if I might so describe the distinguished persons, the great Proclamation has been a settled fact and has now been working with success. The temples have been sealed to me so far, perhaps voluntarily, and I do not know that if I had made the attempt to enter them I should not have been thrown out of them. But even if I had the liberty, having made common cause with the Harijans I could not avail myself of it. But now that the doors have been flung open to the Harijans also, I shall for the first time take the opportunity of entering your beautiful temple. I take your address as a token of your goodwill. I shall have several occasions to speak on the great act of the Maharaja, and I shall therefore refrain from making anything like a speech here.

This Proclamation throws a tremendous responsibility on the people of Travancore. Rajas and Maharajas can make good laws, but they cannot make the people give proper effect to them. Even tyrants cannot control the hearts of those over whom they hold sway. It all depends on your hearts to give proper effect to the Proclamation. I would ask you to go to the temples not as curiosity-mongers, but in a proper prayerful spirit. If *savarnas* go there with mental reservations, the Proclamation will not be properly carried out. Let the Proclamation proclaim the fact that henceforth in Travancore there is no

[1] A mammoth meeting of the citizens welcomed Gandhiji at the Trivandrum station, where the City Municipality presented him with an address of welcome.

distinction between *savarnas* and *avarnas*, touchables and untouchables. Having said this much, I do not propose to tax your patience any more. I do hope that your good wishes will fit me for my pilgrimage through Travancore. I thank you.

The Epic of Travancore, pp. 144-6

261. SPEECH AT DAKSHINA BHARAT HINDI PRACHAR SABHA, TRIVANDRUM

January 13, 1937

I am glad to have been asked to distribute the certificates and prizes to those who have passed the examination. I do not know whether you will follow even my simple Hindi. I see that some of those who have received their certificates today do not follow it. But that is nothing to be ashamed of. Not living in the midst of a Hindi-speaking public, it is quite natural that you should find it difficult to follow spoken Hindi. What is gratifying is that you are taking some pains over learning Hindi in this Southernmost part of India. But please remember that your objective is not to win certificates but to obtain a working knowledge of Hindi. A certificate can but stimulate you to further effort, in order that you may be induced to put up a serious endeavour for an ever-increasing knowledge of Hindi. The first thing that you have to bear in mind is that you belong to India, that India is as much your motherland as of those whose mother tongue is Hindi. You have therefore to think of your country not as extending up to a part of the Arabian sea in the west and to the Ghats on the east but to the Hindukush in the north, Karachi in the west and Assam in the east. If you went to those remote parts of your country where other languages are spoken, what would you speak there but Hindi? You will not find many people capable of understanding English. The temple priest in the great Ananthapadmanabha temple here was speaking perfect Hindi this morning when I was shown over by him through the precincts of that vast temple. His Hindi was certainly more flawless than mine and he made me forget for a moment that I was in Travancore. The uppermost feeling in my mind is not that I am a Gujarati but that I belong to the whole of India.

I would appeal to H. H. the Maharaja and Her Highness the Maharani to promote the development of Hindi studies in

Travancore and encourage those who are going in for the study of Hindi. Let the objective of Travancore be to make every literate man and woman here Hindi-knowing.

The Epic of Travancore, pp 147-8

262. SPEECH AT EZHAVAS' MEETING, TRIVANDRUM

January 13, 1937

I wish I were able to speak to you in your own mother tongue. I am sorry that I have not yet been able to learn the very musical language that you speak, and it is a matter of equal sorrow to me that you do not understand the national language of India—Hindi-Hindustani. Therefore we have to fall back on the cumbrous process of translation. But it is inevitable if I am at all to reach your hearts somewhat. I assure you I do not want to make here an idle speech, nor am I fond of hearing my own voice. I know that silence is often better than speech. But I know also from experience that there are occasions when speech becomes a necessity, and probably this is one of those occasions.

I thank you very much for having asked me to preside over this celebrations meeting. I thank you also for presenting me with this address. You have already tendered your hearty congratulations to His Highness the Maharaja and Maharani and Sachivottama Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer. I want to associate myself fully with the expression of your joy and congratulations. The joy is written on the numerous faces of this assembly over the restoration of a right which was taken away from you, no one knows how many years ago. You have done well also in tracing the historical sequence of the agitation for opening all the temples to the *avarna* Hindus in Travancore, and I again associate myself with you in the praise you have bestowed upon His Holiness the late Narayanaguru Swami and also upon that brave soul Madhavan. You will also let me recall in this connection two names—I mean the late Krishnaswami who at the time of the Vykom Satyagraha used to lead the prayer in his own inimitable manner with recitations of verses from *Gita Govinda*. Though a staunch Brahmin and lover of his religion, he made common cause with all the *avarnas*. And I may not forget also one who is still in our midst—Sjt. Kelappan Nair. These brave men laid the foundation of the thing we see today in our midst.

But I think that we may not forget the orthodoxy which has come to our assistance at this hour, and in this connection I suppose I may not omit to mention the Namboodiri orthodox people whom I had found to my great regret very difficult to convert to the obvious truth. If they and the other orthodox people had not recognized the spirit of the times, it might be that they would have rendered the task of their Highnesses well nigh impossible or, at least, ineffective.

In this connection let me recall also a meeting I had with the Senior Maharani years ago. That meeting took place when the Vykom Satyagraha was going on, and I appealed to her, with all the earnestness at my command, to come to the assistance of all those who were fighting a forlorn battle, to issue a new *Smriti* and to declare all the temples open. She and her husband, who was present at the interview, expressed their sympathy with this movement. They both welcomed the movement that was going on in Travancore for the liberation of *avarnas*. But they felt burdened with the responsibility of a great State and told me that the time had not come for taking that great step. She then thought that it was still necessary to sound *savarna* opinion and to convert it to the reform. Several years have passed by since that interview. Thanks be to God that you did not remain idle during all these years, and but for the sustained efforts on your part to arouse both *avarna* and *savarna* public opinion, even the Maharaja with all the goodwill in the world would have found it impossible to issue the Proclamation. I hope that the Senior Maharani is today rejoicing over the great change that has come over Travancore and over the fact that the Proclamation is being welcomed by all and sundry—both *avarnas* and *savarnas*. I am hoping also that with the incoming of this great change over the State of Travancore the *savarna* Hindus are as enthusiastic in visiting temples as the *avarna* Hindus. I want to tell all *savarnas*, men and women, who have from day to day gone to these temples in search of blessings and in the hope that their prayers will be answered, I want to assure them that the temples have gained in efficacy and not lost one whit from the efficacy they enjoyed. Our Shastras teach us—I am not giving you any new truth—that efficacy lies in our hearts, not in stone however well-carved it may be, and I do hope that your faith will not fail you because a large part of your co-religionists have had an ancient right restored to them of offering their prayers in the same manner and on the same conditions as you have offered them.

I would like to mention one sorrow that has oppressed me ever since I came here. I have wondered why you have called this celebration Ezhava Temple-entry Proclamation Celebrations. I wonder if presently we shall have All-Travancore Pulaya and Pariah Celebrations! I know and I grant that Ezhavas are a great and growing and important community in Travancore, but have I not seen the Pulayas and Pariahs of Travancore? When I have met them I have not been able to stare them straight in their faces. I have felt deeply humiliated. I shall never forget the sight of an old Pulaya man shaking with fear, as he was brought to me, and as he tried to hand me a sheet of paper which had been put into his hands. He was brought to me in Cochin as I was passing through the crowds in the streets. I was told that he held in his hand an address to be given me on behalf of the Pulayas. His withered hands, as they were shaking, could not deliver that address in my hands. There was no lustre in his eyes. I do not know that I saw even a ray of hope in those deep sunken eyes. He did not know what he was being called upon to do. I do not know that he could understand the choice Malayalam which the Namboodiri volunteer was speaking. I seized the situation at a glance. I hung my head in shame and sorrow, and I felt it my duty to snatch that precious paper from his hands. Why is he not a member of today's Celebration Committee? I know that he is nameless. Most probably he is dead. If he is alive perhaps he does not know what is happening in Travancore today. And also I asked myself whether you members of this Celebration Committee, you members of this vast gathering, do or do not represent such men. And I must tell you with all respect and humility that if this vast assembly does not represent these Pulayas, then I am certain that there is no place in your midst for me. If this is a purely religious movement, if this is a purely religious revival, if it has no taint of base 'self' in it, then you will be denying yourselves and nullifying the effect of this great Proclamation if you do not represent the lowest and the least in our midst.

You heard with what force Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer spoke to this meeting. The Maharaja has given you a *Smriti*, but it is for you to carry it out and breathe life into it, and you will hopelessly fail to do that unless you rise to the occasion and see to it that this religious spirit pervades the whole of Travancore—both *avarnas* and *savarnas*. I tell you if you approach this great step, each with his own mental reservation,

and not give effect to it whole-heartedly, you will find this Proclamation a nine days' wonder. Therefore I want you to understand, whilst you are properly rejoicing over this Proclamation and celebrating it with the joy and zeal that I see on your faces, that you will not be doing your duty if you do not realize your responsibility to the whole of the community that had been so far excluded.

I see that you are now getting restless. I do not propose to keep you longer than is absolutely necessary. I am speaking to you from the fulness of my heart, and when heart is speaking to hearts, it expects to find a lodgment in those hearts. I do not want to keep you more than perhaps ten minutes now I shall try to omit many of the things I wanted to say this evening, and shall seek another occasion for doing so.

I must mention what I saw at the great Padmanabha Temple. It will perhaps best illustrate what I am saying about the pure and spiritual revival. In the days of my youth I went to so many temples with the faith and devotion with which my parents had fired me. But of late years I have not been visiting temples, and ever since I have been engaged in anti-untouchability work I have refrained from going to temples unless they were open to everyone called untouchable. So what I saw this morning at the temple dawned upon me with the same newness with which it must have dawned upon so many *avarna* Hindus who must have gone to the temple after the Proclamation. In imagination my mind travelled back to the prehistoric centuries when they began to convey the message of God in stone and metal. I saw quite clearly that the priest who was interpreting each figure in his own choice Hindi did not want to tell me that each of those figures was God. But without giving me that particular interpretation he made me realize that these temples were so many bridges between the Unseen, Invisible and Indefinable God and ourselves who are infinitesimal drops in the Infinite Ocean. We the human family are not all philosophers. We are of the earth very earthy, and we are not satisfied with contemplating the Invisible God. Somehow or other we want something which we can touch, something which we can see, something before which we can kneel down. It does not matter whether it is a book, or an empty stone building, or a stone building inhabited by numerous figures. A book will satisfy some, an empty building will satisfy some others, and many others will not be satisfied unless they see something inhabiting these empty buildings. Then I ask you to approach these

temples not as if they represented a body of superstitions. If you will approach these temples with faith in them, you will know each time you visit them you will come away from them purified, and with your faith more and more in the living God.

Anyway, I have looked upon this Proclamation as a pure religious act. I have regarded this visit to Travancore in the spirit of a pilgrimage, and I am going to these temples as an untouchable suddenly made touchable. If all of you will approach this Proclamation in this spirit, you will abolish all distinctions between *savarnas* and *avarnas* as also all those distinctions which unfortunately still exist between *avarnas* and *avarnas*. Finally you will not be satisfied until you have lifted up your brothers and sisters who are supposed to be the least and the lowest, to heights which you have attained yourselves. True spiritual regeneration must include economic uplift and the removal of ignorance and everything that goes to retard human progress.

May God enable you to realize to the full the possibilities that are embedded in this Proclamation of the Maharaja. I thank you for giving me this patient hearing.

Harijan, 23-1-1937

263. *SPEECH AT NEYATTINKARAI*

January 14, 1937[1]

I thank you for the three addresses you have read or partially read here. I wish there was time to listen to all the addresses in full. I have read the Hindi address in full and the second, which is really a report of the Harijan work, I promise to read in full. Needless to say that I associate myself with you in your congratulations to the trinity responsible for the Proclamation over which Travancore is rejoicing, and I congratulate the *savarnas* of this place who unanimously and heartily endorsed the Proclamation. Of course, it is open to the *savarnas* and *avarnas* to make the gracious Proclamation perfectly useless—the *savarnas* may be sullenly discontented and not purify their hearts of untouchability, and the *avarnas* can make it perfectly ineffective by misunderstanding the grace of the Proclamation and by not going to temples in the right spirit. The

[1] The date is from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16-1-1937.

Maharaja, the Maharani and the Dewan have done their duty by issuing the Proclamation which has no reservation, mental or otherwise, behind it; and if both *savarnas* and *avarnas* prove by their real religious conduct that they were worthy of this high act of State, believe me Travancore will go down in history as the saviour of Hindu religion which was in danger of perishing. For I have seen nothing during these long years of struggle against untouchability to modify my opinion that if untouchability lives Hinduism dies. I wish I could infect all of you with the same belief and in every one of your acts you would show that the taint of untouchability has been removed from your hearts.

The Epic of Travancore, pp 161-2

264. SPEECH AT VENGANOOR

January 14, 1937

It gives me great pleasure to be in your midst and greater pleasure still to realize under what auspices I am touring Travancore today. I have in mind the great Proclamation that has practically removed untouchability from Travancore. I say "practically removed" because the Proclamation cannot do everything, although it has worked wonders. To remove untouchability root and branch from this soil and, for that matter, from India, rests with you and me.

In Ayyan Kali, whom you half in jest and half in endearment call the Pulaya Rajah, you have an indefatigable worker. I understand that under his leadership you have been making steady progress and I have no doubt that this gracious Proclamation will quicken the progress you are making. I must not keep you or keep myself long as I have a heavy day in front of me. If I had the time, I would love to pass a whole day with you and know many of you intimately. As it is, I have to be satisfied with having seen your beaming faces and making such acquaintances as I can within the few minutes I have in your midst. I would like to leave just one thought with you before I go. I hope you will make a wise and religious use of this opportunity to go to the temples. It depends upon our mental condition whether we gain something or do not gain anything by going to the temples. We have to approach these temples in a humble penitent mood. They are so many houses of God.

Of course God resides in every human form, indeed in every particle of His creation, in everything that is on this earth. But since we very fallible mortals do not appreciate the fact that God is everywhere, we impute special sanctity to temples and think that God resides there. And so when we approach these temples we must cleanse our bodies, our minds and our hearts, and we should enter them in a prayerful mood and ask God to make us purer men and purer women for having entered their portals. And if you will take this advice of an old man, this physical deliverance that you have secured will be a deliverance of the soul.

The Epic of Travancore, pp. 157-8

265. SPEECH AT TECKLAI

January 14, 1937

I thank you for the addresses, but I must remind you that they should be brief, to the point and written either in Hindi or in Malayalam Surely an address written in English cannot be understood by large masses of people whom we want to serve. If they were written in Hindi, they could catch at least a few words common to both Hindi and Malayalam. You will perhaps say that just as the masses do not understand English, neither do they understand Hindi. But I tell you it does not come to the same thing. Those who are innocent of English surely can pick up a few words of Hindi. And then why should you enclose these addresses in hideous frames? How am I to take all these home? The glass is sure to be damaged, as indeed this one has been damaged and it has thus become a dangerous article to carry.

One word about the Proclamation which has brought me here. I know that your presence here is a sign that you are sharing the celebrations going on in Travancore. Every one of you should understand the significance of the Proclamation. If all men and women here think or harbour untouchability in their hearts, they have not given effect to the Proclamation. That Proclamation tells you—every man and woman and child—that henceforth there is no untouchability in Travancore, that in the sight of God and man, Nairs and Nambudiris, Ezhavas and Pulayas and Pariahs and what not are all equally children of God. And when they get entrance to the Holy of Holies, naturally all other distinctions fall to the ground. Therefore,

those who are better off will take care to see that they will raise those who are worse off economically and socially. And if you have flattered yourselves with the belief that you are *savarnas*, you should bring the *avarnas* out of their houses and teach them the art of worship. But I know that even the *savarnas* have forgotten the art of worship. However, now that the Proclamation has purified the atmosphere, you must learn the art and teach it to the *avarnas*. I hope and pray that you will do so.

The Epic of Travancore, pp. 159-60

266. *SPEECH AT THIRUVATTAR*

January 14, 1937[1]

I was at this place not many years ago when the forbidding-looking walls of this temple seemed to say, "not yet for you this place." Nobody had thought some months ago that there would be a Proclamation of H. H. the Maharaja of Travancore and that all temples would be flung open to the untouchables. The sins of past ages have been obliterated by literally a stroke of the pen. Though it was the hand of the Maharaja that traced the signature over the Proclamation, the spirit behind it was that of the Lord Padmanabhaswami. I understood only today the beautiful legend that passes current in Travancore about the Maharaja. As you all know—I suppose every child in Travancore knows—that the Maharajas in Travancore are known as Padmanabhadas. They are so many Viceroys of Padmanabhaswami, and as I understood yesterday the Maharaja has to go from day to day to that temple and receive instructions about the day's work from Padmanabhaswami. That the thing does not happen as I have described to you as between man and man is true, but the spirit behind the legend is an excellent spirit. It means that the Maharaja may not do anything that is wrong or sinful and has not the stamp of God's approval. And so, as I said, it is the spirit of God that moved the Maharaja to take the great step he has taken and I wish to congratulate you who are the beneficiaries under the great Proclamation. It is a great act whose significance we are yet too near in time to realize. During my last tour I addressed a gathering outside the forbidding-looking temple walls

[1] The date is from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16-1-1937.

as they then appeared to me. I regard myself voluntarily as a Pulaya or a Pariah, the lowest amongst the low, a Harijan amongst Harijans. But the Maharaja himself, as I have now learnt, bears the title of Servant of God, i.e., Harijan, and proudly signs himself as such. No doubt he is the first among God's servants, let us hope by right of service. He is not the first lord among lords and masters. In service there is always open and meritorious competition. It demands no reward, no distinction. Let us look at the Proclamation in this light. Let Nambudiris and other Brahmins and the so-called high-caste people of Travancore rise to the occasion and be voluntarily Harijans amongst Harijans, servants of God, and let all the world know by their action that in virtue of the Proclamation there is none high and none low but all are equal in the eyes of God.

The Epic of Travancore, pp. 163-4

267. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, NAGERCOIL[1]

January 14, 1937

I am not a stranger to Nagercoil and for that matter to the whole of Travancore. You have more than once made me acquainted with the Nagercoil crowds. You have on more than one occasion shown your boundless enthusiasm, if it was only in point of attendance. You do not expect me to give you lengthy replies to the addresses you have been good enough to present to me. Indeed you need not have presented me with any address at all on this occasion. No doubt I have come to share in your rejoicings over the Proclamation. But I have come more as a penitent pilgrim than anything else And my mind just now is so full of the duty that lies in front of you in virtue of that Proclamation that I cannot divide my attention among other things. Nevertheless I must express my astonishment at getting double addresses from those who are engaged in carrying on Hindi propaganda. I have not been able to find out the reason for this overlapping of energy, but I dare not give time to unravelling this mystery.

[1] The meeting was attended by no less than 50,000 people. Addresses of welcome were presented to Gandhiji on behalf of the Municipal Council, the Hindi Prachar Sabha, Nanjinad Sambar Sangam and Hindi Prem Sabha.

Let us consider the duty devolving on those for whom the Proclamation has been designed. You may take this Proclamation as an ordinary act of the State to which for the most part people are indifferent, or you may regard it as an extraordinary act of the State on which the future of Hinduism depends; and if you assimilate the spirit of the Proclamation, the result will be astonishing not only for Travancore but for the whole of India. This untouchability was, and I suppose I must still say is, a weedy growth upon Hinduism, so much so that it threatened to smother the finest flowers of Hinduism. I regard this Proclamation as a very brave attempt—an outstanding attempt—to rid Hinduism of the curse of untouchability, and in issuing the Proclamation the Maharaja and his advisers have laid the axe at the root of untouchability. But the Proclamation will be of no use if there is no response on the part of the *savarna* and *avarna* Hindus. Ever since my coming to Travancore I have been doing nothing but visiting temples which were until a little while ago forbidden ground to me by my own choice. So long as these temples were barred against the major part of the Hindu population of Travancore, the temples could go on as they liked. The Proclamation is the beginning of the process of purification of Hinduism, and in the process both *savarnas* and *avarnas* have to play their due part. It would be a great reflection on *savarna* Hindus if the untouchables of yesterday were to be left to their own resources. It is therefore absolutely necessary for you and me to find out the place temples have in the growth of Hinduism. You and I have to find out whether a living God resides in these temples. I assure you that our search will be in vain unless we put our hearts into it and apply our minds to it. In all humility I fancy that I know how that search is to be made. But during this hurried tour and hurriedly-got-up meeting, it is not possible to dilate on the search. I must seek some other and better opportunity for making that enquiry. It may be sufficient for the time being if I have succeeded in stimulating your appetite for that search. It will give me great satisfaction if I have succeeded in convincing you that we may not take this Proclamation in the ordinary way. It will be enough if every man and woman realizes his and her duty with reference to the working of this Proclamation. With this thought I propose to leave you to-night.

The Epic of Travancore, pp. 165-7

268. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

CAPE COMORIN,
January 15, 1937

CHI. MIRA,

I had your two letters received last night at the Cape—the end of the earth. And I had reply by wire to my telegraphic inquiry about you, Shanta and Kumarappa. I hope you showed your foot to the C. S. I am anxious about it. You have severe cold there and we here melt on the slightest pretext. I hope you are at peace with yourself. I am not in favour of your going in for new experiments in charkha-making. The charkha which is the simplest and the best is the cheapest in the long run. But if you want to make the experiment you can make it. The question of money does not weigh with me. It is that of postponing the progress of the boys under training. The highest speed has been attained on the flat thing. The vertical is cumbersome. Remember you are training boys who are unused to any spinning. If I were you, I should make them as fit as they can be on the wheel which has proved its worth as the best all-round charkha.

I must not give much time to correspondence, as I want to devote what I have today to *Harijan*.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W 6374. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9840

269. TRAVANCORE PILGRIMAGE

[*January 15, 1937*][1]

I am writing this at the Cape in front of the sea where three waters meet and furnish a sight unequalled in the world. For this is no port of call for vessels. Like the goddess the waters around are virgin. The Cape has no population worth the name. The place is therefore eminently fitted for contemplation. This is the third day of the pilgrimage. Having mentally

[1] Gandhiji was at Cape Comorin on this date.

and voluntarily become an untouchable and therefore shunned the temples which were barred against fellow untouchables, I feel like them the joy of the removal of the bar. I approached the great temple in Trivandrum with awe and due veneration. Curiosity had given way to the incoming of something that was to fill the void of years. As I write these lines I am reminded of the peace I felt in the Cathedral in Madras to which Bishop Whitehead had taken me now over twenty years ago. In that Cathedral on the particular morning, so far as I remember, we were the only two persons present. In the Trivandrum Temple there were thousands awaiting the arrival of my party. But there was no noise, no bustle. Untouchables of yesterday were in the silent concourse in perhaps equal numbers. I could not distinguish between the two. All had almost the same marks on their bodies, all had the same kind of garments. Evidently the custom is to have only seamless wear which need not be more than a *lungi*, never more than a wrapper added to it. The majority, including the priests, were bare-bodied. In the midst of this vast assemblage, I seemed to enjoy the kind of peace I had felt in the Madras Cathedral. And yet the two were quite different. The Madras peace had no background. This the Padmanabha Temple had. And I would not have experienced it if the crowd had been boisterous or at all in a non-spiritual mood. All those bare bodies in spotlessly white *lungis* standing row upon row in perfectly silent and reverent attitude produced an impression upon me which will endure till life lasts. The entry into the very spacious temple, crowded with images which the guiding priest in his choice Hindi made almost to speak, was no less soul-stirring. Then we reached the great central image. It was all like a day-dream. The knowledge that I was visiting the temple designed specially for the Maharajas of Travancore and that too in the company of the hitherto despised untouchables, heightened the effect which the images and the surroundings had produced upon me. The silence and the attitude of worship have continued at the three temples I visited between Trivandrum and the Cape. And this morning I visited the famous temple at the Cape, dedicated to the Virgin. Accompanied by a large party of Harijans who were singing *bhajans*, we passed through the street leading to the temple. The street like the temple was forbidden to the untouchables. But now, without any opposition from anywhere, we walked through it and then into the temple as if we had never been prohibited. It is a dream realized in a manner and

in a place where the realization seemed almost unthinkable before it was realized elsewhere. "You may have temples opened in the North, but you will never succeed in having them opened in Cochin and Travancore—the citadels of orthodoxy," I used to be told before. Now one citadel has yielded with rare generosity and grace. The genuineness of the generosity and grace seems to have disarmed all opposition. The legend attached to the acts of the Maharajas of Travancore had perhaps its due share in the conversion of the people. The Maharajas are called 'Padmanabhadas', meaning servants of Padmanabha, i.e., God. The Maharajas are supposed to visit the temple every morning (and I understand they do whilst in Trivandrum) and receive instructions for the day's work from God. The Proclamation is therefore an act of God through His servant the present Maharaja. Whatever may be the cause, the fact of the Proclamation being given effect to by an overwhelming number of *savarnas* and being availed of by *avarnas* stands out as a miracle.

But the very miracle weighs me down with a sense of responsibility which chastens me and affects my elation. If what is going on today is to be consolidated, there must be continued effort by all true Harijan workers for the education of both *savarnas* and *avarnas* on the meaning of the Proclamation. But a few months ago it was the fashion on the part of *savarnas* to say that *avarnas* did not want temple-entry. It was equally the fashion on the part of some vocal members among the *avarnas* to say that they did not care for temple-entry and that they cared only for economic uplift. Both mistook the meaning of the anti-untouchability campaign. The Travancore experience has opened their eyes. The right of entering temples abolishes untouchability at a stroke—untouchability that prevented a large section of Hindus from sharing with the rest the privilege of worship in the same manner as the latter. Economic uplift was there. But the best among the *avarnas* felt the sting of the deprivation. It soured them and angered them against the haughty *savarnas*. Now all that has changed. The *avarnas* feel the glow of freedom which they had never felt before.

All this marvellous result may easily be nullified if it is not followed up to its logical conclusion. Before *avarnas* can forget the past, they must be made conscious of what they have come to. The message of freedom must be carried to the humblest hut. The minds of the Pulayas and the Pariahs should be opened to the implications of the suddenly-acquired freedom. This does not need an elaborate programme of literacy. That must come.

But what is needed is immediate human contact. For this an army of volunteer workers of the right type is needed. And just as the message of freedom has to be taken to the *avarna* huts, so has it to be taken to the *savarna* homes.

Then there is the question of reform of temples from within. Here I cannot do better than quote from a long letter from a Mussalman friend who believes in Hinduism as much as he believes in Islam:

> You will soon be going to Travancore to celebrate the entry of Harijans into the temples thrown open to them It is indeed a step forward. But what we need most is the restoration of the temples to their pristine purity and sanctity The ideal thing behind temples is most holy In the temples of ancient India resided great *rishis* who imparted divine wisdom. Today the priest sits there barring the way to those who need instruction and help to solve the problems of life. Alas! the priests of all religions are more in need of instruction than the poor masses

These words are true. Never was the need for temple reform more urgent than today. Fortunately in Travancore the vast majority of temples belong to the State and are under special management. They are kept clean and often undergo improvement and addition. They are never empty. They supply a felt want. If the priests had better education and would be custodians of the spirituality of the people, the temples would be houses both of worship and spiritual instruction as they were before.

Harijan, 23-1-1937

270. WHAT IS KHADI SCIENCE?

I have often said that if khadi is a sound economic proposition it is also a science and a romance. I believe there is a book called *The Romance of Cotton* wherein the origin of cotton has been traced and an attempt made to show how its discovery altered the course of civilization. Everything can be turned into a science or a romance if there is a scientific or a romantic spirit behind it. Some people scoff at khadi and betray signs of impatience or disgust when one talks of hand-spinning. But it ceases to be an object of disgust or ridicule immediately you attribute to it the power of removing India-wide idleness, unemployment and consequent pauperism. It need not be, as a matter of fact, a panacea for the three ills. To be absorbingly interesting, the mere

honest attributing of the power is enough. But you cannot attribute that potency to khadi and pursue it, as some do, in the manner of an ignorant needy artisan who gins, cards, spins or weaves because he must for his bread. A believer in its potency will pursue it in a deliberate, wise, methodical manner and in a scientific spirit, taking nothing for granted, testing every proposition, checking facts and figures, undaunted by defeats, unelated by petty successes, never satisfied till the goal is reached. The late Maganlal Gandhi had a living faith in the potency of khadi. It was for him a thrilling romance. And he wrote the elements of the science of khadi. No detail was too trifling for him, no scheme was too big for him. Richard Gregg had and has the same fire in him. He has given it a universal meaning. His *Economics of Khaddar* is an original contribution to the movement. He recognizes the spinning-wheel as the symol *par excellence* of non-violence. It may or may not be all that. But their belief gave Maganlal Gandhi and gives Richard Gregg all the joy and pleasure derivable from any fascinating theme. A science to be science must afford the fullest scope for satisfying the hunger of body, mind and soul. Sceptics have wondered how khadi can afford such satisfaction or, in other words, what I mean when I use the expression "Science of Khadi". I cannot better answer the question than by copying below the questions framed by me hurriedly for a khadi worker who offered to be examined by me. The questions were not framed in their logical sequence nor were they exhaustive. They admit of rearrangement and addition. But I reproduce a translation made for me by a friend from the original in Hindi.

Part I

1. How much cotton is produced in India and where? Name the varieties. How much remains in India, how much is spun by hand, how much goes to England and other lands?

2. (a) What quantity of cloth is manufactured in Indian mills? How much of it is used in India and how much is exported?

(b) Of the above how much is manufactured from swadeshi mill yarn and how much from foreign mill yarn?

(c) How much cloth is imported?

(d) What quantity of khadi is produced in India?

Note: Give your answers in square yards and in terms of money.

3. Discuss the merits and demerits of the three kinds of cloth above mentioned.

4. Some say khadi is dear, coarse and not lasting. Give

your answers to these complaints, and where there is foundation for any of them offer your solution.

5. In the (A.I.S.A.) khadi work how many spinners are engaged? How much have they earned during all these years? Give the number of mill spinners and their total annual earnings.

6. (a) How is the work of the A.I.S.A. carried on? How much is spent by them in administration?

(b) What staff is employed in the running of a swadeshi mill, and what proportion of wages do such persons get in comparison with the mill hands?

7. (a) What place in your opinion does clothing occupy in the necessaries of life?

(b) Name the chief necessaries of life and give their proportionate percentages

8. If everyone in India gave up wearing mill-made cloth, whether foreign or Indian, how much money would remain in India and to whom would it go?

9. What does India export in place of the cloth she imports? What loss, if any, does India sustain through this exchange?

10. What percentage of the population is able to buy cloth?

11. What is the percentage of those who have the leisure to make their own cloth? And how?

12. "Khadi will establish perfect economic balance." Is this statement really correct? Give reasons for your answer.

13. If khadi became universal, what effect would this have on trade, occupation and transport, and in what manner?

14. Assuming that for another 50 years khadi does not become universal, what is likely to be the effect on the economic condition of our people?

PART II

1. Give a description of current Indian spinning-wheels Which is the best amongst them? Give drawings of any four spinning-wheels and the correct measurement of each constituent part. State the species of wood employed, the length and the girth of the spindle and the thickness of the *mal*.

2. Compare the current charkhas with the Yeravda wheel in the matter of speed, cost and general advantages.

3. How would you ascertain the variety of cotton, the strength of the yarn, and the count of spun yarn?

4. Of what count and strength is the yarn you spin? What is your speed on the *takli* and the wheel? Which wheel do you generally use?

5. How much cloth does a man and a woman require respectively for his or her clothing? How much yarn is required for making the same, and how much time is necessary for spinning it?

6. How much yarn is required to clothe one family? How much cotton is needed to produce the above? How much land is required for growing the necessary amount of cotton?

(A family consists of a father, mother and three children—one girl and two boys, 7, 5 and 3 years old.)

7. Compare the current carding-bow with the new ones. How much do you card per hour? How can you judge whether the cotton is properly carded or not? How long does it take you to make one pound of slivers? How many slivers do you make from one *tola* of cotton?

8. How much cotton can you gin in one hour? Compare ginning by hand with ginning by machine, giving the respective merits and demerits of either process. Describe and give a drawing of the current hand-ginning machine.

9. Give the length of the yarn of 20 counts required to weave one yard of cloth 36 inches wide. How many hands are required to weave the same?

10. Compare the pit loom with the shuttle loom.

Harijan, 16-1-1937

271. NOTES

For Khadi Organizations

The year 1936 is just over and all khadi organizations would do well to examine promptly and carefully the results of the year's work and submit their statements to the A.I.S.A. office. I have asked the latter to produce a brief but full report of the work of the Association during the last year, particularly with reference to the working of the new scheme of increased spinning wages. Such a report can be had only if all the branches and the various organizations affiliated to the Association readily co-operate and send without delay accurate particulars regarding work done and results achieved by them to the Central Office. The plans and programme for the current year have to be prepared at once, and for this, too, full information regarding the previous year's working is indispensable. I hope therefore that khadi organizations will realize the urgency and supply all available informa-

tion to the A.I.S.A. office at the earliest moment. Let them remember that time is of the essence in this matter.

SPINNERS' WAGES

The council of the A.I.S.A. has decided that the A.I.S.A. branches and its certified organizations should give spinning wages on the basis of a scale sufficient to enable the spinner to have, besides minimum clothing requirements, adequate nutritive diet for eight hours' efficient work. The various branches and organizations have, in accordance with this decision, fixed suitable standards of spinning rates which are calculated to enable the spinner to earn a daily wage of Rs. 2 to 2½. This wage is, however, related to efficient work and can be actually earned only if the requisite standard of output and quality of yarn is attained by the spinner. The standard fixed, though high, is not difficult to attain, but it must be admitted that at the present time only a small percentage of the spinners has come up to it, partly because of the crudeness of the spinning-wheels and slivers they use and partly because of their lack of skill. The real objective of the scheme is, however, not merely to lay down a reasonable scale for wage basis but to enable the bulk of the spinners to actually earn the same. It, therefore, becomes the duty of all workers engaged in production activity to do all that they can to help the spinners to attain the requisite skill besides securing satisfactory wheels and slivers so as to ensure the actual earning of the desired wage by them. It is hoped the khadi workers will not rest content until the majority of the spinners on their registers actually earn the amount aimed at. Let them also realize that the higher scale is not the highest aimed at. The real aim in terms of present values is to ensure eight annas for eight hours' attentive and skilled spinning. That may be a far-off event. But it will never come unless very early ten pice become as natural as three are today. Let it be also remembered that in the new scale the increase is roughly distributed half-and-half between the effort of the spinner and the rise given by the A.I.S.A.

AN IMPORTANT CORRECTION

I know there are readers of *Harijan* who study many articles that appear from time to time in *Harijan*. The weekly is not published for providing momentary amusement or pleasure for the reader It is designed to be a serious contribution to the Harijan cause in the widest sense of the term. It therefore often contains writings of more than transitory value. Hence serious errors need

to be corrected. Such an error was detected in the *Harijan* of the 9th inst. at page 382, 2nd column, line 2. Read 'sub-human' for 'human'.[1]

Harijan, 16-1-1937

272. SPEECH AT SHIVAGIRI MATH, VARAKALLA

January 16, 1937

It gives me very great pleasure to be in your midst for the third time. The first time I was here, I had the pleasure of paying my respects to your Guru, the great Swami[2]. You have invited me to study his work in your midst. Well, I did so as fervently as I could even on the first occasion I was here: I had long and serious discussions with him over matters of common interest, and I had no difficulty in agreeing with him on many subjects of which we spoke. I had discussions also at that time with his first and learned disciples. After his lamented death, his disciples sent me many things including a collection of the Swami's sayings. I studied them with the respect that the work of such a great man demanded.

You are quite right in saying that every time I have come here I have taken away something for myself. I admit that I have no title whatsoever to the title of "Mahatma". That title has often embarrassed me, sometimes it has stunk in my nostrils. This has happened whenever with the name of 'Mahatma' on their lips people have done something unworthy. I have no new religion to give, no new truth to expound. My humble role is that of a scavenger both literally and spiritually. I know the outward art of cleaning the streets, commodes and latrines, and I am endeavouring to the extent of my ability to clean my inside also, so that I may become a faithful interpreter of the truth as I may see it.

Of course I had many things in common with the teachings of the Swami. I do believe that there is only one religion in the world, but I also believe that although it is one mighty tree, it has many branches. I tried to explain this thing to the Swami as I recollect even today. And even as all the branches take their sap from one source, even so all religions derive their essence from one fountain-source. Of course there can be only one God if there is one religion, and God who is one complete whole cannot

[1] *Vide* p. 215.
[2] Narayanguru Swami

have many branches. But He is invisible and indefinable and, one might literally say that He has as many names as there are human beings on earth. No matter by what name we describe Him, He is the same without a second and if we are all children of the same Creator, naturally there cannot be any caste amongst us. We are one brotherhood and sisterhood, and there cannot be any distinction of high and low amongst us. There are no *savarnas* and *avarnas*, or all are *savarnas* or all are *avarnas*.

But each one of us has his or her occupation cut out for himself or herself. This occupation is not caste, but it is known in Hinduism as varna, which has nothing in common with caste as we understand it today. Caste is a man-made institution only, fit to be destroyed, but varna is a divine law. We may disregard it to our harm, and we will profit by it if we follow it. A carpenter, a blacksmith, a mason, a scavenger, a bricklayer, a teacher, a soldier—these have different occupations, but none is high and none is low among them. And if we begin to overlap one another, we create a *sankara* (confusion) of all varnas. Therefore immediately you take away the sting of distinction from different varnas, it becomes not only a law, but it gives us an opportunity of doing what we are particularly fitted for. That is what Hinduism teaches us. That is my interpretation of all true religions. That is my interpretation of Hinduism pure and undefiled. So far as I understood the great Swami, he did not dissent from the view I have just expounded to you.

You have tickled me by inviting me to come and settle down here. The temptation is really great. This is one of the pleasantest spots in India and the weather here is magnificent. I know that if I should come here I should be surrounded by friends who would provide me with all my needs. But the path of life, if taken religiously, is strait and narrow. It has been described as sharp as the edge of a sword. You cannot look this side or that side without stumbling into an abyss. And the *Gita* says that better by far is the religion which is cut out for you than one for which you are not born. Therefore, although the temptation you have held forth is very great, I must resist it just now.

The Epic of Travancore, pp. 168-71

273. SPEECH AT PARIPALLI

January 16, 1937

It gives me great pleasure to be in your midst. I see from your address, which I have already read, that many of you have walked nearly 22 miles to come to this meeting. I am sorry that it was not possible for the managers of this tour to enable me to go to your places in the hills.

I have heard something of the great work that is being done by Sjt. Raman Pillai among the hill tribes of Kadakal and Paripalli. Evidently from his hoary beard he appears to be as old as I, if not older. But from the energy with which he addressed this meeting, I thought he was a young old man It gives me great joy to know that in him you have an indefatigable worker, guide and friend. I am glad to find that several activities are being conducted for your benefit. You are right in saying that this Proclamation is epoch-making and glorious. It is like a gift suddenly come into the possession of a man who is not fit to receive it. The suddenness of it shows that it is something for which neither you nor I were prepared. Not that what has been given was not due to us. But the deprivation of many long years seemed to make us unfit to receive the gift when it came. But what I have been witnessing round me shows that you were fit for the gift, and having got the gift it appears you were never deprived of it. For I know that wherever I have visited temples—where there were Harijans and non-Harijans—I failed to see any distinction between the two. The demeanour and attitude of the Harijans seemed to be as if they were to the manner born. They were spotlessly clean and their attitude of reverence left nothing to be desired. There was among all these men and women a dignity that was truly captivating.

But we should be making a serious mistake if we thought that nothing now remains to be done. The present gives the promise of a bright future if we take the full advantage of the opportunities given to us by reason of the Proclamation. I do hope that many *savarna* Hindu workers will come forward to carry the message of the Proclamation to the *avarnas*, to take them out of their huts, accustom them to going to the temples, and explain to them the implications of the Proclamation. For sceptics and

heretics the temples have no meaning, but for one who has believed in temples there is no mistaking the fact that constant temple-going changes the whole outlook on life of temple-goers. May this be realized among all these so-called *avarnas*.

The Epic of Travancore, pp 172-3

274. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

QUILON,
January 16, 1937

CHI. BRAJKISAN,

I have your letter. You did indeed commit an error. It has done no good either to Damodar or to Vishwanath. Its doing you any good was of course out of the question. But telling you this will not undo the error, nor will your giving up salt, which in any case has no bearing upon this error arising from attachment. I have already told you that the allowance you receive is for your maintenance and is not to be spent for the satisfaction of your personal cravings. And that if anything is left over it should be spent for public service. I have no hopes of Damodar or Vishwanath. What you now propose to do is the right thing. Sell the books and such other things and repay the debt. If the amount thus obtained is insufficient you may earn some by your own labour; otherwise be patient. Your best repentance will be to make sure that you do not ever again make the same mistake and are careful in everything.

I return you the letter. Mother, I hope, is well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I shall probably return to Wardha on the 24th.

From a photostat of the Hindi G N 2456

275. SPEECH AT QUILON

January 16, 1937

I am deeply grateful to you for having waived your undoubted right of reading your address.[1] You have been good enough to save your time and my time. I am no stranger to this place. I have many a happy recollection of my stay here. When I came here last it was thought a presumption for an *avarna* to enter a temple, but now I have come to share with you your rejoicing over the Proclamation. It is a brave, generous and gracious act and it combines the enthusiasm of the young Maharaja with the wisdom and courage of Her Highness the Maharani, his mother. As you may be aware, I had the pleasure and privilege of waiting upon them in their palace and renewing their acquaintance. The Maharani's queenly heart was full of joy over the manner in which the *avarnas* and the *savarnas* had received the Proclamation, and I saw the young Maharaja nodding his assent to everything that his gracious mother was saying to him. And every lover of the State, from one end of India to the other, has testified to the fact that the Proclamation lacks nothing in completeness. By a stroke of the pen, it opens all State temples to all those who call themselves Hindus without the slightest reservation. As I have said so often, such an act could not be prompted by any purely worldly considerations. There must have been the spirit of God inspiring both the wise mother and the brave son.

As I have been going from temple to temple and looking at beaming faces of perhaps tens of thousands of men and women, mingling together without the slightest distinction, I confess I have not been able to restrain my joy at the sight. I have called it a great religious revival that is going on in Travancore. That religious revival began some years ago, but we had no visible sign, no visible demonstration of it. But this Proclamation is a visible demonstration of the revival which he who runs may read. To me it is a great sign of purification of our ancient faith. I have held for now close on half a century that untouchability is

[1] The address was presented by K. S. Parameswara Pillay, Chairman of the Municipal Council.

the greatest blot on Hinduism, and therefore you can only imagine—I cannot describe it fully—my joy over the Proclamation. I congratulate all the Travancorians on this signal gift which you have received from your Prince. I only hope that you, who have begun so well, will also end well, till the light that has been lit in Travancore will spread throughout Bharatvarsha. The Maharani and the Maharaja and the Dewan have done their duty. They can do no more. But if this light is to spread throughout India, it will be purely as a result of your response to the Proclamation. You have to understand the implications of this great act and your response must not be purely formal, but must come from the bottom of your heart and then, and not till then, will be manifested the great change of heart for which I have been pining all these years and for which I have always been fervently praying.

Let me for a few moments consider what Hinduism consists of, what it is that has fired so many saints about whom we have historical record. Why has it contributed so many philosophers to the world? What is it in Hinduism that has so enthused its devotees for centuries? Did they see untouchability in Hinduism and still enthuse over it? In the midst of my struggle against untouchability I have been asked by several workers as to the essence of Hinduism. We have no simple *Kalema*[1], they said, that we find in Islam, nor have we 3.16 *St. John*[2] of the Bible. Have we or have we not something that will answer the demands of the most philosophic among the Hindus or the most matter-of-fact among them? Some have said, and not without good reason, that the *Gayatri* answers that purpose. I have perhaps recited the *Gayatri mantra* thousands of times, having understood the meaning of it. But still it seems to me that it did not answer the whole of my aspirations. Then as you are aware I have, for years past, been swearing by the *Bhagavad Gita*, and have said that it answers all my difficulties and has been my *Kamadhenu*, the Cow of plenty, my guide, my open sesame, at hundreds of moments of doubt and difficulty. I cannot recall a single occasion when it has failed me. But it is not a book that I can place before the whole of this audience. It requires a prayerful study before the *Kamadhenu* yields the rich milk she holds in her udder.

But I have fixed upon the *mantra* that I am going to recite to you, as containing the whole essence of Hinduism. Many of you, I

[1] "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His Prophet."

[2] "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

think, know the *Ishopanishad*. I read it years ago with translation and commentary. I learnt it by heart in Yeravda Jail. But it did not then captivate me as it has done during the past few months, and I have now come to the final conclusion that if all the Upanishads and all the other scriptures happened all of a sudden to be reduced to ashes and if only the first verse in the *Ishopanishad* were left intact in the memory of Hindus, Hinduism would live for ever.

Now this *mantra* divides itself in four parts. The first part is ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किंच जगत्यां जगत्. It means, as I would translate: All this that we see in this great Universe is pervaded by God. Then come the second and third parts which read together, as I read them: तेन त्यक्तेन भुंजीथा. I divide these into two and translate them thus: Renounce it and enjoy it. There is another rendering which means the same thing, though: Enjoy what He gives you. Even so you can divide it into two parts. Then follows the final and most important part: मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम्—which means: Do not covet anybody's wealth or possession. All the other *mantras* of that ancient Upanishad are a commentary or an attempt to give us the full meaning of the first *mantra*. As I read the *mantra* in the light of the *Gita* or the *Gita* in the light of the *mantra* I find that the *Gita* is a commentary on this *mantra*. It seems to me to satisfy the cravings of the socialist and the communist, of the philosopher and the economist. I venture to suggest to all who do not belong to the Hindu faith that it satisfies their cravings also. And if it is true—and I hold it to be true—you need not take anything in Hinduism which is inconsistent with or contrary to the meaning of this *mantra*. What more can a man in the street want to learn than this that the one God and Creator and Master of all that lives pervades the Universe?

The three other parts of the *mantra* follow directly from the first. If you believe that God pervades everything that He has created, you must believe that you cannot enjoy anything that is not given by Him. And seeing that He is the Creator of His numberless children, it follows that you cannot covet anybody's possession. If you think that you are one of His numerous creatures, it behoves you to renounce everything and lay it at His feet. That means that the act of renunciation of everything is not a mere physical renunciation but represents a second or new birth. It is a deliberate act, not done in ignorance. It is therefore a regeneration. And then, since he who holds the body must eat and drink and clothe himself, he must naturally seek all that he needs from Him. And he gets it as a natural reward of that

renunciation. As if this was not enough, the *mantra* closes with this magnificent thought: Do not covet anybody's possession. The moment you carry out these precepts you become a wise citizen of the world, living at peace with all that lives. It satisfies one's highest aspirations on this earth and hereafter. No doubt it will not satisfy the aspirations of him who does not believe in God and His undisputed sovereignty. It is no idle thing that the Maharaja of Travancore is called *Padmanabhadas*. It is a great thought. We know that God Himself has taken the title of *Dasanudas*—servant of servants. If all the princes would call themselves servants of God, they would be correctly describing themselves, but they cannot be servants of God unless they are servants of the people. And if zamindars and monied men and all who have possessions would treat themselves as trustees and perform the act of renunciation that I have described, this world would indeed be a blessed world to live in.

I must not labour the meaning of this *mantra* any longer. I know that many of you here are learned men. My knowledge of Sanskrit is poor and I am a man of the street having no pretensions to learning, but what little I have read and what little has commended itself to me I have assimilated. I suggest to you that this *mantra* has nothing abstruse in it. Anybody can understand its meaning and follow it out in daily life. Therefore I want to suggest to the whole of this audience that they should carry the whole of this *mantra* in Malayalam to every home and help everyone to shape their lives in accordance with this *mantra*; and I make bold to say that having done so they may, without reading any other scriptures, call themselves Hindus. Disputes and differences arise when you begin to read big tomes and discuss interpretations of varying dictums contained in them. But now that, in virtue of this Proclamation, the distinction between high and low is abolished in Travancore, and there are no *avarnas* and *savarnas*, you will see that this *mantra* will satisfy all your wants. You will model your conduct in the spirit of this *mantra* and you will not find it difficult to live in the spirit of this Proclamation. I am saying this with a full sense of my responsibility. It is for you the people of Travancore to make or unmake this act of the great king. The opportunity for serving one's faith or one's fellow-men does not easily occur. That opportunity has come to you all of a sudden. May God grant you the measure of understanding that is necessary to live up to the spirit of this Proclamation.

The Epic of Travancore, pp. 174-80

276. *COW-PROTECTION OR COW-SLAUGHTER*

We find that many of the things we do are contrary to our beliefs or our religion. We believe that we should speak the truth, yet we practise untruth; we believe that we should not indulge in immoral activities but we do indulge in them; we believe that we should refrain from violence, yet we practise it at every moment; we believe that we should win swaraj, yet do much which is contrary to this belief. We do not even do khadi work which will promote swaraj. The human race would perish if it always acted against its beliefs in all matters. Innumerable persons thoughtlessly do what should not be done. The foregoing describes the plight of those who have formed the habit of thinking.

Failure to serve the cow is an instance of conduct contrary to religion. Every Hindu believes that it is his special dharma to serve the cow. But only a handful of Hindus will be found to observe the basic rules of *goseva*. Many persons believe that they have done their duty once they have put a couple of pice into the cow-protection fund. These thoughts came to my mind while reading a letter written by Shri Purushottam Narhar Joshi who calls himself a "*gosevak*". Shri Joshi is not only the head of the State goshala of Bhavnagar but also takes interest in cattle development. His letter[1] runs as follows.

Who will not believe while reading this letter that cow-slaughter is being practised under the guise of cow-protection? We do not become murderers only when we commit actual murder with a knife. We commit murder even when we watch someone else being murdered and do not attempt to prevent it even though it is within our power to do so. Many of the suggestions made by the *gosevak* Shri Joshi can be put into practice anywhere in India. His letter is mainly addressed to Kathiawar and particularly the ruling princes there, as they can easily take up this work. Every State can set up one or more dairies, keep good stud

[1] Not translated here. The correspondent had said that though cows played a very important part in the national life of India, they were neglected. Because of poor breeding bullocks were unsuitable for draught purposes He had suggested that the Goseva Sangh should draw up a plan for improving the condition and breed of cows.

bulls for the benefit of the people, castrate each and every male calf, supply good cows to whosoever needs them, provide facilities for training in animal husbandry, maintain pastures within their own States and prevent the cruel slaughter of buffalo-bulls which is being practised.

I shall take up later the suggestions which Shri Joshi has made about the activities of the Goseva Sangh.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 17-1-1937

277. SPEECH AT THATHARAMPALLI

January 17, 1937

As a matter of fact I am ill able to speak to you this morning. Ever since my arrival in Travancore I have been suffering from a bad cold and I am afraid I cannot give you a considered speech. I am glad Hindi is making steady progress. I wish everyone knowing English will hold it a crying shame not to be able to speak Hindi as well as English. I tell you it will not take as many years as the study of English does. One reason why it is easier than English is that it has a vocabulary which is common to Malayalam and, even like geographical and climatic conditions, the religious conditions of this great country make all tongues of India in many respects common. The sound of different languages does not strike as strange to our ears. When I hear Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, Oriya or Bengali, I assure you my ears do not notice any foreign element in that sound and although I do not know these languages I can very often gather the drift because of the common words in these languages. Now if I were to read this Hindi address to you, I am sure you will notice that many words in it are common to Malayalam. Addressing a meeting in Bangalore, I showed that the majority of words in Hindi were quite common to Kannada.

Now I have not said all these things in order to worry you for nothing. From an all-India point of view, it is a foregone conclusion that you must know Hindi. But it has something to do with the Proclamation also. If the *savarnas* are to give effect to the Proclamation, they must be blood-brothers with the *avarnas*, and for that you must spread yourselves amongst *avarnas*. And if there is any spirituality in you, it will overflow in many directions. I had a Pulaya girl coming to me this morning with a petition in her hand. She was a very good specimen of humanity, but she

presented her petition in bad English. She wanted some help for her English studies. The person who wrote the petition for her had misrepresented things, but I could not ascertain the correct position from her as she could neither talk Hindi nor English. I have of course handed over her petition to the local Harijan Sevak Sangh. But if this girl had been taught Hindi, I am sure she would have been able to talk to me fluently. I must tell you that a girl of thirteen should be able to call herself an Indian, not merely a Travancorian. Had she known Hindi, she would have been able to travel from one end of India to another without much difficulty. Now fly with me on the wings of your imagination to the Hindukush. What would happen to the girl there? She would be as much at home in Kashmir as here. Here is the point I am trying to make. Supposing you have understood the point of my remark and decided to go about amongst *avarnas*, you will teach them not English but Hindi, and thereby you will enrich yourselves and enrich the boys and girls you will take up, and you will broaden your outlook and theirs, and not commit the atrocious blunder of giving them a modicum of bad English, but straight away you will give them the treasures hidden in Tulsidas. For believe me the Proclamation can become a dead letter not through any fault of the Maharaja but through sins of omissions and commissions on your part.

The Epic of Travancore, pp. 181-3

278. SPEECH AT HARIPAD

January 17, 1937

At this meeting I would love to detain you for a few minutes on the message of Hinduism I gave to the meeting in Quilon last night. I ventured at that meeting to say that the whole of Hinduism could be summed up in the first verse of *Ishopanishad*. I suggested then that if all other Hindu scriptures happened to be reduced to ashes and to go out of the memory of men and if only that one verse were to abide with us, the destruction would be no loss. Hinduism would even then remain with us. The original Sanskrit of the *mantra* is perhaps as easy as anybody learning Sanskrit could possibly wish. This Upanishad enjoys the reputation of being part of the original Vedas. It is the shortest Upanishad known to us. But, as I have said, if we had only the first verse of of that Upanishad remaining with us, it would be enough to

supply all our wants. Let me repeat that *mantra* in my faulty Sanskrit pronunciation:

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किंच जगत्यां जगत्
तेन त्यक्तेन भुंजीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ।

Those who know a little bit of Sanskrit will find that there is nothing abstruse there that you find in other Vedic *mantras*, and its meaning is simply this. All that there is in this Universe, great or small, including the tiniest atom, is pervaded by God, known as Creator or Lord. Isha means the Ruler, and He who is the Creator naturally by very right becomes the Ruler, too. And here in this verse the seer has chosen no other epithet for the Deity but that of the Ruler, and he has excepted nothing from His jurisdiction. He says everything that we see is pervaded by the Deity, and from that naturally the other parts of the *mantra* follow. Thus he says: Renounce everything, i.e , everything that is on this Universe, the whole of the Universe, and not only this tiny globe of ours, renounce it. He asks us to renounce it as we are such insignificant atoms that if we had any idea of possession it would seem eudicrous. And then, says the *rishi*, the reward of renunciation is भुंजीथा, i.e., enjoyment of all you need. But there is a meaning about the word 'enjoy'—you might as well say use, eat, etc.,—but it means that you may not take more than is necessary for your growth. Therefore this enjoyment or use is limited by two conditions. One is the act of renunciation or, as the author of the *Bhagavata* would say, enjoy in the spirit of कृष्णार्पणमस्तु सर्वम्. And every day in the morning everyone who believes in Bhagavata Dharma has to dedicate his thoughts, words and deeds to Krishna, and not until he has performed that daily act of renunciation or dedication has he the right of touching anything or drinking even a cup of water. And when a man has performed that act of renunciation and dedication, he derives from that act the right of eating, drinking, clothing, and housing himself to the extent necessary for his daily life. Therefore take it as you like, either in the sense that the enjoyment or use is the reward of renunciation, or that the renunciation is the condition of enjoyment, renunciation is essential for our very existence, for our soul. And as if that condition given in the *mantra* was incomplete, the *rishi* hastened to complete it by adding: 'Do not covet what belongs to another.' Now I suggest to you that the whole of the philosophy or religion found in any part of the world is contained in this *mantra*, and it excludes everything contrary to it. According to the canons of interpretation, anything that is incon-

sistent with *Shruti*—and the *Ishopanishad* is a *Shruti*—is to be rejected altogether.

Now I should like to apply this *mantra* to our own condition in virtue of the Proclamation. Whilst I have unstintingly associated myself with your rejoicings over this great Proclamation and in tendering my thanks and congratulations to His Highness, Her Highness and their Dewan, in terms of this *mantra* I am obliged also to say that this Proclamation is a tardy carrying out of the behest contained in this verse of the *Ishopanishad* that I have recited. Only yesterday we were unfit to call ourselves Hindus. For if all that there is in the Universe is pervaded by God, that is to say, if the Brahmin and the Bhangi, the learned man and the scavenger, the Ezhava and the Pariah, no matter what caste they belong to—if all these are pervaded by Lord God, in the light of this *mantra*, there is none that is low, all are absolutely equal, equal because all are the creatures of that Creator. And this is not a philosophical thing to be dished out to Brahmins or Kshatriyas, but it enunciates an eternal truth which admits of no reduction, no dilution[1]. Therefore the Maharaja himself and the Maharani are not one whit superior to the lowliest being in Travancore. We are all creatures and servants of one God. If the Maharaja is the first among equals, as he is, he is so not by right of overlordship but by right of service. And therefore how nice, how noble it is that that very Maharaja is called 'Padmanabhadas'. It is a proud title and I congratulate those who bestowed that title on the Maharaja of Travancore. Therefore when I told you that the Maharaja or the Maharani were not one whit superior to any one of us I told you what was the actual truth accepted by their Highnesses themselves. And if that is so, how can anyone here dare to arrogate superiority to himself or herself over any other human being? I tell you, therefore, that if the *mantra* holds good, if there is any man or woman here who believes that the temples are defiled by those called *avarnas*, that person I declare would be guilty of a grave sin. I tell you that the Proclamation has purified our temples of the taint that had attached to them.

I would like the *mantra* I have recited to be enshrined in the hearts of all our men and women and children, and if this contains, as I hold, the essence of Hinduism, it should be inscribed on the portals of every temple. Don't you then think that we should be belying that *mantra* at every step if we excluded anyone from

[1] The source has "palliation".

those temples? Therefore if you will prove yourselves deserving of the gracious Proclamation and if you will be loyal to yourselves and to those who preside over your destinies, you will carry out the letter and spirit of this Proclamation. I regard it as such a great spiritual act that it ought to remove scepticism from the hearts of sceptics or doubt from the hearts of those who doubted the truth of Hinduism or religion itself. Rightly understood this Proclamation should dispel the ignorant atheism of so-called atheists. From the date of the Proclamation the Travancore temples, which, as I once said, were not abodes of God, have become abodes of God, since no one who used to be regarded as untouchable is any more to be excluded from them. I therefore hope and pray that throughout Travancore there may be no man or woman who will abstain from going to the temples for the reason that they have been opened to those who were regarded as Pariahs of society.

Harijan, 30-1-1937

279. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

HARIPAD,
January 17, 1937

CHI. MIRA,

I had your letter yesterday too. I am glad you are comparatively at peace with yourself. It will come if you will make an honest attempt. I have not understood your reference to pretension about personal service. But I shall know when we meet.

The tour is going on quite well.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6375. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9841

280. LETTER TO S. AMBUJAMMAL

January 17, 1937

CHI. AMBUJAM,[1]

I reach there (D.V.) by the Express 22nd morning and pass the day at Kodambakam catching a train for Guntur in the evening.

[1] The superscription and the subscription in this letter are in Hindi.

I would like you during the day, if it is at all possible, to show Kanu the way of playing on the vina. And if it is easily purchasable and not costly, I would like to buy one for K. You can best guide me in this matter.

The tour is progressing well. I hope Father is keeping good health.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: Ambujammal Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

281. LETTER TO MANU GANDHI

January 17, 1937

CHI. MANUDI,

I got your letter. I understand what you tell me. I remember you often. I very much wanted to take you with me, but I felt that it would not be right to do so. You must be getting letters from Nimu. I want to reach there on the 24th. Let us see what happens. There it is cold; here it is terribly hot.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati. C.W. 1563. Courtesy Manubehn S. Mashruwala

282. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

January 17, 1937

CHI. MUNNALAL,

There is no letter from you. You must have impressed Mirabehn. It is an easy task. There seems to have been some confusion regarding fruit. The reply to this I shall get when I reach there, which I expect to do on the 24th. Let us see what happens.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8360 Also C W 7005. Courtesy Munnalal G. Shah

283. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

January 17, 1937

CHI. KANTI,

Half an hour's trip in a boat has become protracted into one of three or four hours. I am therefore writing this on whatever paper I could lay my hands on. When would I get again so much time to write to you if I insist on using hand-made paper?

Saraswati went about with me for three days. We spent one afternoon at Ramachandran's father's place. I have talked over the matter with Saraswati and Ramachandran. We have fully discussed about Santiniketan. Ramachandran is not at present willing to send Saraswati to Santiniketan and he never was. If Saraswati had continued in the Mahila Ashram, then after her course there was finished he would have agreed to send her to Santiniketan. Now Ramachandran wishes that she should not go anywhere till she has finished her matriculation. He told me that Saraswati was no more keen about Santiniketan. I told both of them that if they desired that she should go to Santiniketan, I would not oppose the plan.

Ba desired that the betrothal should take place while I was here. But Ramachandran and I felt that so long as you two were staying apart and occupied with your studies, there was no need for betrothal The idea, therefore, has been dropped for the present I see from what Ramachandran said and from my talk with Saraswati that though she is not very intelligent, she is not likely to weaken in her resolve regarding you. The attitude of Ramachandran's parents is the same. I had a talk with Saraswati's father also and saw that he was no more opposed to the proposal. I had asked Mahadev also to talk with him. He has already done so. He will write to you. He did tell me one thing, however, that you were sensitive about every little thing, take offence even when there is no cause for any offence and hurt those who love you.

It is my complaint against you that you don't take care of your health. I repeatedly advise you that you should not study at the cost of your health. Do study as much as you can but remember that good health is the first condition of happiness.

Please write to me so that I get your letter on the 24th at Wardha. I expect to reach there on that day.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7312. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

284. LETTER TO BALWANTSINHA

January 17, 1937

CHI. BALWANTSINHA,

I hope you are free of the ailment. You must not have even a single boil.

The cows here are even smaller than our cows and their milk yield is also very poor.

Rest from the *Harijan Sevak*.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi G.N. 1889

285. LETTER TO LAKSHMIDAS ASAR

TRAVANCORE,
January 18, 1937

CHI. LAKSHMIDAS,

Hand over Anandi's and Puratan's letters to them. I believe that everything will be all right. Send Anandi to reach Wardha on the 24th. It will not matter if I reach there a day late. Durga is there in Maganwadi. A letter for Velanbehn also is enclosed.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 5069 Courtesy: Anandibehn P. Buch

286. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

January 18, 1937

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I am writing this letter at 9.30 p.m. while crossing one of the numerous creeks in Travancore. Half an hour's trip has proved to be one of three hours. Let us see when we reach our destination. As we are not carrying hand-made paper with us, I am using this. If I don't write now, I don't know when again I shall be able to. My companions are Rajkumari, Prabhavati, Mahadev, Pyarelal and Kanaiyo. This is a real pilgrimage. I never visited as many temples as I am doing now. Besides, the devotion with which I visit them was not there before. The throwing open of hundreds of temples to Harijans after the launching of the temple-entry agitation for Harijans is no ordinary event. You will read about all this in both *Harijan* and *Harijanbandhu*. I am hoping to reach Wardha on 24th.

I hope your affairs are going on well. Sushila, you must have recovered completely and must have found out the cause of the miscarriage. I hope Sita also is well.

Here comes the place where we land and this letter-writing must stop for the present.

Here I stop.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G N 4859

283. SPEECH AT SHERTHALAI[1]

January 18, 1937

It is a matter of the greatest pleasure to me to be in your midst this afternoon. It is unnecessary for me now to say that I associate myself entirely in the expression of gratefulness to the Maharaja of Travancore. There can be no doubt that but for

[1] The occasion was the Proclamation celebration organized by the S.N.D.P. Yogam, the principal Ezhava organization.

his solicitude for the faith of his ancestors and but for the wise guidance of Her Highness the Maharani and the able assistance of Sachivottama Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, we should not have seen this Proclamation. But I would like to repeat to you what I have said on other occasions: that if the hand that traced the signature to the Proclamation was that of the Maharaja, the spirit which moved the hand to sign it was that of God. In spite of the brave guidance of his wise mother, the youthful ruler of Travancore might well have quailed before taking the unprecedented step of removing, by one stroke of the pen, untouchability which was double-distilled in Travancore. But whilst many things are impossible for mere man, nothing is impossible for God. And in pursuance of the divine voice within, the Maharaja bravely took up the pen and signed the Proclamation which was drafted for him by the Sachivottama. I would like you to look on the Proclamation as a divine gift and therefore respond to it in the spirit in which it has been given to you.

My interpretation of the Proclamation is that it removes the age-long, and yet irreligious, distinction of high and low. There is before God, whose creatures we are all, absolute equality of all. It is man who in his arrogance has disturbed the even justice of his great Deity. The Maharaja has now removed the taint of untouchability and declared once for all to all his subjects that all have equal rights in the matter of temple-entry, and it follows that if they have equality in the matter of temple-entry, they should have equality in all other matters of life. And as I have begun to say for the last two or three days, the Proclamation is wholly consistent with the essence of Hinduism which is very briefly, but equally brilliantly, given in the first *mantra* of *Ishopanishad*. I commend that Upanishad, or at least its first *mantra*, to the attention of every one of you here. I will give you only a free translation of that *mantra*. It means this: God the Ruler and Creator pervades everything that is in the Universe down to the tiniest atom. There is nothing, without a single exception, where God is not. And naturally therefrom follows what the seer has said in the other part of this *mantra*, viz., dedicate all at the feet of the Almighty or, in the language of the *Gita*, renounce everything. But renunciation cannot, must not, mean suicide. Therefore, the *rishi* or the seer says in the same breath: renounce or dedicate and then use or enjoy. But he felt that he had still not given the whole essence so that even a small child could understand it. Therefore, he wound up by saying: "Do not covet anybody's riches." Therefore your use and enjoy-

ment is limited in two ways. The first condition is that we should consider nothing, not even our bodies, as our own, because we have got to dedicate or surrender everything to God the Ruler. The second condition is that we must not steal what belongs to others. That does not mean that we will not, merely physically, help ourselves to what belongs to our neighbours, but that we will not even cast hungry eyes on it. If we really want to enjoy the things we eat or the clothes we wear or the houses we live in, we must make up our minds definitely that the things are not more than we need for our sustenance and for the praise of our Maker. Then as creatures or children of God we realize that what we eat or clothe ourselves with or live in, does not belong to us but to God. And this advice is not given to a few chosen creatures of God, but to everyone in the world. You will see that the dominant part of the *mantra* is that every atom is pervaded by God. Therefore, the advice as to the renunciation or dedication or surrender is given to all His creatures. It is, therefore, not as if it was a command given to a few people, but the enunciation of a universal law or universal truth. Just imagine if all of us were to live faithfully in accordance with the great law of our being, what a happy world it would be in which we should be living. Then there would be no mutual jealousies, no mutual strife. And those who are blessed, if I might say so, with certain possessions would constitute themselves trustees for such of those as might want them. In virtue of the law that I have endeavoured to explain to you, those who have much possession will use it only to the extent of their own limited requirements. And evidently because the tradition among the Maharajas of Travancore is that they are to constitute themselves servants of Padmanabha, the practice that is in vogue today is that the Maharaja goes to the temple and dedicates himself to the Deity and as His agent and viceroy takes definite instructions to conduct his affairs from day to day. It is perfectly true that these instructions are not given and taken as from man to man, but that even as I suggested to you, it was the spirit of God which moved the Maharaja to take this action. Similarly if he goes to the temple for instructions in a spirit of prayer and humility, he clothes himself with the spirit of God. I do not want, therefore, to deceive myself or you into a false belief or superstition. Far be it from me to suggest that the Maharaja is an infallible being or that he never commits any error of judgment. I do not

know what errors of judgment he has committed if any, but assuming that he is a mortal being and, like any one of us, liable to commit errors of judgment, the fact is that he has got to live up to this *mantra*, and, as it is recognized in the blue blood of Travancore, that tradition requires the Maharaja from day to day to perform this act of dedication, and to the extent that he does so his acts must become infallible. Whatever may be the fact about the acts of the Maharaja, I have used the thing as an illustration to show how this law operates with us in India. Consciously or unconsciously, however imperfectly, it must express itself in our acts and our lives. Your temple-going means that and nothing else or nothing less. If you approach the temples in that spirit, you will renew yourselves day by day as you go to the temples. And hitherto a large part of the Hindus who were deprived of the opportunities of daily surrender and dedication will get that opportunity. The Proclamation has now removed this very great and serious discrepancy or defect.

You have done right in rejoicing over this Proclamation. It was undoubtedly your duty to tender your loyal congratulations to Their Highnesses, but that is merely the beginning of your response to the Proclamation. You must now realize the fullest significance and implication of this Proclamation. You have to make a spiritual use of the opportunity given to you, and I assure you if you realize the deep spirituality of this Proclamation everything else will follow from it as day follows night. The winter of your despair is over, the spring of your hope is now in front of you, and if you will really blossom forth and fully enjoy the fruits of the Proclamation, you will not sit idle but you will live up to the meaning I have given you of the first *mantra* of *Ishopanishad*, and what is equally important is that you will take the message of hope to those who do not even realize what the Proclamation means. Heaven knows there may be thousands who do not realize this. It is your duty to take the message to those less fortunate than you are. Whatever you may have done in the past, I do hope you will not commit the fatal mistake of making any distinction between Ezhava and Pulaya, but you will resolutely make up your minds to think and act in such a manner that you will raise them to the same common platform.

I want you to believe me when I tell you that the essence of Hinduism is contained in the single *mantra* which I have given

you. I want you to believe me when I tell you that anything that is inconsistent with the meaning of that *mantra* is not Hinduism. It does not matter in the least what other things inconsistent with the *mantra* are to be found in what is known as Hinduism. I suggest to you that if you believe in this *mantra*, it ought to satisfy your highest aspirations.

The last time when I passed through Cochin and Travancore I had the pleasure of meeting several Ezhava friends. Many of them were very bitter against Hinduism and Hindus. They took pride in describing themselves as atheists and not Hindus. They were prepared to burn the books which passed under the name of Hindu scriptures. I know that this Proclamation has steadied those unbelievers. I sympathized with them at that moment as those who discussed with me will bear testimony. They could not help being bitter and atheistic when they believed that it was the hand of the *savarna* that was held against the reform. They were bound to take the *savarna* belief and conduct as a correct expression of the true Hindu belief, but now they know that the *savarna's* heart is changed. Therefore in passing through so many places in Travancore I have found no opposition among *savarnas*. I have met during this tour tens of thousands of people and I have not known any distinction being made between man and man. If these crowds contained thousands of erstwhile untouchables they also contained thousands of so-called *savarnas*. But assume for one moment that the *savarna's* heart is not changed. Our religion ought to be totally independent of the conduct of other people towards us. For its source is derived from God within, and if we will be true to our God, we will never forsake the faith we derive from Him. With God as our Guide, Master, Ruler in everything that we do, we may defy the whole world's opposition and stick to our faith. And I dare say that the *mantra* whose meaning I have given you is calculated to satisfy the highest aspiration of any being on earth. May it satisfy your aspiration also and may God give you the strength to live up to it. I thank you.

The Epic of Travancore, pp. 189-95

288. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, VAIKOM[1]

January 18, 1937

I suppose you can better imagine than I can describe my joy for being a second time in your midst and under such happy auspices as you all know. Only a few years ago one had to struggle hard to get the roads leading to the great temple thrown open to *avarna* Hindus. Good Madhavan, assisted by Krishnaswami of revered memory and by Kelappan, laid the foundation of that struggle. It is a matter of deep sorrow to me—as it must be to you—that neither Madhavan nor Krishnaswami is here to share your rejoicings.

Now I am on a pilgrimage, as I have called the present tour of Travancore. Throughout the whole course of my life I do not remember having entered so many temples as I have during these few days of pilgrimage, and only an hour more and I shall have the privilege of entering the forbidding-looking walls, as they then were, which surround the great temple of this place. And all these good things have come to pass because the Maharaja and the Maharani resolved to carry out the sacred resolve under the inspiration of Padmanabhaswami. But the Proclamation can be rendered fully ineffective if the *savarnas* and *avarnas* of Travancore do not make an adequate response to this Proclamation. It is not enough that the *savarnas* and the *avarnas* continue to go to the temples just as they are doing now. Hitherto people have gone to the temples more by way of formality than from conviction. They had not reasoned out for themselves why they needed to go to the temples. Largely throughout India the temples have been popular more with women than men, and they have gone there in order to ask some boon of the God residing in those temples. But now if you have rightly understood the Proclamation and all it means, I expect much more from you than a mere formal going to the temples. In my opinion the Proclamation is a call to purification addressed to every Hindu in Travancore, whether *savarna* or *avarna*. It

[1] The meeting was held in the Satyagraha Ashram ground. According to Mahadev Desai, over twenty-five thousand people attended.

was the *savarnas* who for a thousand years—maybe several thousand years—had deprived their own fellow-religionists of the right of worshipping the same God in the same manner that they worshipped. And in order to justify such an atrocious injustice—no matter for what causes—a whole class of human beings were held as untouchables. Now that the sinful distinction has been abolished by a stroke of the pen, in order that you may render some reparation to *avarna* Hindus you have got to adopt some measure to let them know that you are no longer the superior beings that you have claimed to be all these years. Therefore I would expect all *savarnas* to take the glorious message of liberation to every *avarna* home. It can be done very easily and without much effort on your part. Only one condition is indispensable. You should believe from the bottom of your heart in the necessity of the Proclamation and every Hindu—*savarna* and *avarna*, man and woman—should make it his or her individual work to get hold of some *avarnas*, to take to them the message of the Proclamation and take them to the temples. And since the spiritual regeneration of an individual or a nation must include all the departments of life—economic, religious, social,—uplift in those departments is bound to follow. You will be vastly mistaken if you labour under the delusion that all these things are going to be done by the Proclamation.

I think that the Maharaja's and the Maharani's task is finished, so far as untouchability is concerned, by issuing this Proclamation. That there would be financial aid by the State for the education of these classes is a foregone conclusion. But that can never bring about the regeneration that I am picturing to myself. That requires a hearty and willing co-operation of the *savarna* Hindus as a class. You can therefore understand my sorrow when I heard—I do not know with what truth—that some women and even men were hesitating to enter the temple which they used to do regularly. In order to disabuse such doubters, if there are any here, of their doubts, I want to quote one historical fact that took place when I was here in connection with [the] Vaikom Satyagraha. Some of you may remember that I had more than one serious discussion with the *shastris* who were then residing within the temple precincts, and who were attached, if I remember rightly, to the temple in some shape or other. I am trying to give you as correct a version of that discussion as I can recall at the present moment. In support of the proposition that even roads leading to the temples were barred against *avarna* Hindus although they were not barred against non-Hindus,

they produced a book called *Shankara Smriti*. I had never heard of such a *Smriti* before I came to Vaikom and heard it quoted. You will be astonished to find that when I had that *Smriti* translated for me, I could not find in it any authority for closing the roads. But I grant that it was enough for them that they believed that the *Shankara Smriti* supported their contention. Then, as I was negotiating through the then Commissioner of Police and with the Senior Maharani, I just asked the question that supposing as a result of the negotiations the Maharani issued orders to open the roads to the *avarna* Hindus, what would be their attitude to them? Then without the slightest hesitation they said: 'Oh! that is a different thing altogether; a Hindu Prince or Princess has every right to issue an order which has the authority of a *Smriti*!' They said that was implied in Hinduism as Hindu kings are repositories of Hindu faith and they have every right to issue orders which are not inconsistent with *Shruti*. I asked them whether the same thing applied to the opening of the temples. They said, 'Most decidedly.' Let me tell you that these *shastris* were not the only *shastris* that gave this reply. I asked the same question to *shastris* in Cochin and Tamilnad and they gave the same answer. As a matter of fact that is the historical evolution of *Smritis* and for that matter of the eighteen *Puranas*. They were all produced or inspired in response to the want of those times. They do not always express eternal verities. The eternal verity is summed up in one verse of the *Ishopanishad* as I have been saying. And without fear of contradiction I am here to say that every believer in this verse is wholly a Hindu, and if he acts up to what is taught by this *mantra* he will find his freedom here and hereafter. I know no other road or better road to happiness than is contained in this first *mantra* of *Ishopanishad*. And if a Hindu Prince, in conformity with the implications and teaching of this *mantra*, issued a Proclamation, such as has been issued by the Maharaja of Travancore, it would carry such authority. And I invite those who know anything of the *Ishopanishad* to tell me whether this Proclamation is in any way inconsistent with this *mantra*. If they will make a prayerful search within and examine it, they will find that the Proclamation is a tardy fulfilment of its requirements. Therefore with all the earnestness that I can command I want to ask every doubter—man and woman—to throw away those doubts and heartily respond to the Proclamation. I must not take this theme any further, as I want to introduce another subject. I shall conclude this part by hoping that the Proclamation

will have your hearty, not lukewarm, support and that you will carry it out in letter and spirit.

And now I want to take you all on the wings of your imagination to Cochin. I have come to the borders of Cochin, as far as it was possible, and I understand on the other side of the waters at a distance of less than ten miles lies Cochin. I suppose the last time I came to Vaikom I came through Cochin. But since I am not going to Cochin, I may permit myself to refer to Cochin which is so intimately connected with Travancore. Conditions in both the States are identical and the practices and usages in the two States are the same. I understand that the Maharaja of Cochin has even some rights and privileges with regard to the Vaikom temple. I must confess to you that I am impatient to see that the Cochin Maharaja follows in the footsteps of the Maharaja of Travancore. I have no desire whatsoever to embarrass His Highness. I am myself an old man—awaiting any day the warrant of Yamaraja[1]. The Maharaja is older than I by six years. I assure you that whilst I am overjoyed over the Proclamation and the celebrations in Travancore, I am oppressed by the responsibility which touches every *savarna* Hindu—not that it devolves any the less on the devoted heads of *avarna* Hindus. Only just now what I want to be done has got to be done, and can only be done, by the *savarna* Hindus. I want you to adopt a respectful and prayerful attitude towards the old Maharaja of Cochin. But with due regard to his age and rank, we should be false to the faith we hold in common with him, we should be false to truth, if we did not convey to him our deepest wishes. I claim to have understood the tenets of Hinduism and for an unbroken period of 50 years followed them as far as an imperfect being like me can. And when I have repeated from every platform that untouchability is a blot on Hinduism I have weighed every word of it and I have based my opposition to untouchability on the Hindu Shastras and nothing else. Therefore I venture to convey to the Maharaja of Cochin that what the Maharaja of Travancore guided by his mother has done is no new-fangled venture of a youthful sovereign. I verily believe that when all else about Travancore is forgotten, this one act of the Maharaja will be remembered by future generations with gratitude. I hold that this Proclamation must not begin and end with the border of Travancore.

Then let me give you a little tip. I want you to be at Cochin in imagination. That means that your conduct should

[1] God of Death

affect the decision of the Maharaja of Cochin. How can this be done? By prayerful and religious spirit, as expressed in your own individual conduct, you can influence His Highness. I do not suggest sending petitions to the Maharaja of Cochin. Petitions may be submitted by the people of Cochin, but you the people of Travancore can do something better. Old men are never moved from their purpose by appeals to the intellect. I tell you there are many young men after me to convert me to their views, and they find that they cannot easily take me with them. But the hearts of old men become increasingly responsive with age and so whenever young men or young women want me to do anything they have to get round not my intellect or reason but my heart. So also must it happen to the old Maharaja of Cochin, and you can touch his heart, not through any newspaper propaganda, but by becoming better Hindus under the liberties granted by the Proclamation, by showing that you *savarna* Hindus have not lost a tittle of your religious fervour, nor have the temples a tittle of the sanctity attached to them by the readmission of *avarnas* to them.

I have so often said, and certainly held the belief, that our temples were losing their sanctity by reason of our criminal neglect of our untouchable brethren. If you realize your responsibility under the Proclamation, you will at once think with me that you cannot be indifferent to what temples mean to you and whether you go there or no. And when the best of you continue to go to the temples and see to it that temples undergo a process of regeneration and the life of *avarnas* becomes purified, no Maharaja can help being moved by such a spectacle. I tell you if you have really understood the spirit of the Proclamation, the silent revolution that the Hindu life will undergo in Travancore will be irresistible and will overtake not only Cochin but every corner of Hindustan.

May God grant that even as the foundation of temple-entry in Travancore was laid in this place by humble workers like Madhavan and the late Krishnaswami and Kelappan, may God grant that you people of Vaikom will lay the foundation of the purification of Hinduism, and thus induce the Maharaja of Cochin to open all the temples in his State and thus render an equally great service to Hinduism with the Maharaja of Travancore.

Harijan, 6-2-1937

289. INTERVIEW TO A TEMPLE TRUSTEE, VAIKOM[1]

[January 18, 1937][2]

I have not been a temple-goer but now that this liberty has come to me all of a sudden, I feel fascinated, and the divine stillness that surrounded the prayer meeting under the *ashwattha* tree in the temple yard now stimulates me to find new ways and means for attracting people to temples. My temple-going is not an idle thing. It is a definitely sacred thing that has come to me in my life at an opportune moment.

QUESTION: Would you say anything about the mode of worship?

ANSWER: I will not criticize it. The new thing has come upon me with a newness which humbles me. I refuse to look at it with the eye of a critic. One thing certainly I have noticed, viz., the want of intelligence and devoutness on the part of priests.

The Epic of Travancore, pp 66-7

290. SPEECH AT ETAMANOOR

January 19, 1937

I am deeply grateful to you for your beautifully-worded Sanskrit address and the gift of the bark tree cloth. I cannot say that I am going to wear this cloth. For one thing it is too dear for me to wear, but it will adorn the museum that we have set up in Maganwadi containing specimens of village crafts.

As I was being taken round the temple and as I approached the central part of the temple, I had a Pulaya boy shown to me, and he boldly mounted up the steps with me. A few months ago, I should not have considered such a thing possible in my lifetime, but what often is impossible for man is easily possible for God to fulfil. And as I said last night and have repeated

[1] The trustee in question had earlier opposed the opening of temples to Harijans. Now he had come to express his satisfaction over what had happened.

[2] Gandhiji was at Vaikom on this date.

at several meetings, I see in this Proclamation the spirit of God working through the hand of the Maharaja. As a man, however highly placed he was, he could not have possibly worked the wonders that I see about me in Travancore. If he was a perfect autocrat, heedless of the feeling of his people, he could have issued this Proclamation, but he could by that act no more have touched your hearts than I could have by sending this Proclamation to you. He could not have made tens of thousands of *savarnas* brush shoulders with the so-called *avarnas* and go to the temples in a prayerful mood. For this change of heart—for I cannot call this thing by any other name—only God is responsible. Was I not here only a few years ago and did I not see the hardened features of thousands of people whom I could not move from the citadel of untouchability? That citadel at that time seemed to me to be harder than the hardest steel. And had I not a living faith in God, I should have despaired of your hearts ever being touched. But evidently the age of miracles is not gone. And I see today those very hard hearts having melted. I met last night a Nambudiri *shastri*, intimately connected with the Vaikom temple, who, as I saw during our conversation, was the old friend with whom I had discussions during the Temple-entry Satyagraha at Vaikom. And I asked him whether he could confirm the conversation between him and me which took place then and which I recalled during my speech last evening. Well, in a few years' time, that old man's heart has melted like snow under the Travancore sun, and he and I, instead of finding ourselves in opposite camps, found ourselves last night congratulating the Government upon the Proclamation.

But congratulations are not enough. It would have been monstrous if you had not tendered congratulations to both the Maharaja and the Maharani. It is not enough that on an occasion like this thousands of you gather and without any distinction go to the people. This expression of joy, this meeting of *savarnas*' and *avarnas*' hearts must not be a matter of momentary enthusiasm. The process must be continued with redoubled vigour so that nobody would have the misfortune of describing Travancore as a land possessing unapproachables, invisibles and what not. The literature dealing with Pulaya and Pariah should be a thing of the past, to be recalled, if it is ever to be recalled, as relics of the past. And I assure you that this Proclamation will fail of its purpose if this change is not brought about in every department of life. The Maharaja and the Maharani have

done their task. It is now reserved for you, the *savarna* men and women of Travancore, to go down to them whom we have persecuted as the outcastes of society, to fraternize with them and own them as members of our families. It must be heart-felt, real, genuine acceptance, without mental reservations, of the Proclamation. It must not be allowed to become a dead letter. It is not meant to be a dead letter. From the heart-to-heart conversations that I had the privilege of having with the Maharani and the Maharaja and the Dewan, I know they want it to be given full effect to. Take this, therefore, as an honest and herculean effort to purify Hinduism. That process of purification is no one man's concern. It is the individual concern of every one of you here. May God give you enough strength for fulfilling the purpose behind the Proclamation.

The Epic of Travancore, pp 205-7

291. SPEECH AT KUMARANELLOOR[1]

January 19, 1937

There is a special joy that I am experiencing this morning, having come to this temple and having seen what I have seen. I was duly prepared for this upliftment. I was told that this was one of the oldest and most important of private temples, that it was the sole property of the Nambudiris, and that when this temple was declared open, people thought that there remained nothing now to be done in connection with temple-entry. But when I came here and saw what I did see, the joy which was reserved for me was considerably enhanced. Here behind me is the trustee of the temple who took me to the temple with great affection. For this I was not unprepared, because it has been my rare good fortune to experience that personal affection throughout this pilgrimage. But what gladdened my heart was to see that he invited the so-called *avarnas* to come and enter the gates before he took me. And it did not appear to me an artificial act, but perfectly natural. Nowhere else has it happened like that during these seven days of my pilgrimage. Of

[1] Delivered on the occasion of the opening to Harijans of a private Nambudiri temple, about two thousand years old, to which Gandhiji was specially invited

course I do not notice the omission anywhere, for the so-called *avarnas*, or as I call them by the term of endearment 'Harijans', mixed freely with the others, and there was nothing more required by way of coaxing them to go into the temples. But it was most striking for me to observe that here our friend the trustee would not be satisfied until he drew the hesitating *avarnas* and brought them to my notice. I felt then that this was really the proper manner of giving effect to the Proclamation. The Proclamation does not say that the hitherto proud Nambudiris should take *avarnas* by their arms and give them the place of preference in the temples. Of course I own that the spirit of the Proclamation demands what this friend has done this morning, but then no prince can possibly dictate to the hearts of his people. All responses from the heart must be in their very nature spontaneous, and in this, for him, very natural act of expression of brotherhood I saw a proper fulfilment of the spirit of the Proclamation. My joy was further enhanced by my knowledge that Nambudiris occupy in this State, as in Cochin, a place of pride and privilege. If they even showed secret, sullen opposition to the Proclamation, it could be rendered ineffective. But here in this private temple, the stronghold of orthodox Nambudiris, the Proclamation is evidently being carried out both in letter and spirit.

I must here tell you a little secret. I tell you that I was most disinclined to visit Travancore and it required much effort on the part of Sjts. Govindan and Ramachandran to draw me out of Segaon, and at one time it seemed as though all their labours would be in vain. But things happened to melt my heart and I am being led, as a docile man or woman may be led, by the nose by Ramachandran and company. But the heartening experience that I have undergone here tells me that it would have been a stupid act of foolishness on my part if I had not visited Travancore, if only to see this temple and to see Harijans being led into it. Let this be an example to all Nambudiris and other *savarnas* to follow. That is a very fair illustration of what I mean when I say at so many meetings that the Proclamation is to be carried out in its full effect by the *savarnas*. You must know that the *avarna* Hindus, except those who have undergone training, do not know what the Proclamation is and what it means for them. The burden of drawing them out of the ghettos, to which our ignorance and folly have confined them, and letting them see the sunlight which is

meant for all, and letting their hearts be warmed up by being led to the temples, lies on the *savarnas*. Let it not be said of Travancoreans that what Nambudiris who are supposed to be the highest caste in Travancore did, others failed to do. This burden of drawing the *avarna* brethren and sisters out of their dens depends no less on *savarna* women than on men. I do hope and pray that all *savarna* Hindus of Travancore will carry out the Proclamation to the fullest extent and deserve to be called the liberators of Hinduism, if not its saviours.

The Epic of Travancore, pp 208-10

292. *SPEECH AT THIRUVARPPU*

January 19, 1937

I am told that this place was the scene of satyagraha and suffering. Whatever sufferings were gone through can be recalled with pleasure, now that the Proclamation has brought delight which the satyagrahis had not expected at the time they were going through suffering. I have no time today to give you a long speech nor do you need a long speech from me. All I had to say, all I could say, has been mostly said already, but this I cannot help saying that if you are to reap the rich fruits of the Proclamation, every one of you individually will have to work for it. This Proclamation ought not to be allowed to remain, as many rules and regulations are allowed to remain in their portfolios. This Proclamation is a charter of freedom to all *avarnas* and it washes out the sins of *savarnas* against *avarnas*. But it can only wash out these sins if the *savarnas* realize the full significance of the Proclamation. Therefore the *savarnas* should fraternize with the *avarnas*, not for demonstration but from their very hearts. You will then find that Travancore will be a place of pilgrimage for all the Hindus of India and it will also be a great landmark in the history of Hinduism. The burden of taking the message of Hinduism to everyone rests on the broad shoulders of *savarnas*; and remember that you will fail to do so unless your hearts respond to the Proclamation. May God give you the wisdom and strength to do so.

The Epic of Travancore, pp 211-2

293. *INTERVIEW TO BISHOP MOORE, BISHOP ABRAHAM AND OTHERS*[1]

January 19, 1937

Bishop Moore received Gandhiji cordially and welcomed the Temple-entry Proclamation as an important event He inquired if the *savarnas* and Brahmins also welcomed it, or if there was any opposition on their part.

Gandhiji said he had seen no signs of opposition. He had met several thousands of people, visited several temples, and had found *savarnas* and *avarnas* entering the temples in perfect friendliness

Bishop Abraham asked if the Ezhavas were ready to treat the Depressed Classes of lower castes on terms of equality.

Gandhiji said he could not reply with confidence but he was striving to emphasize that point everywhere, and he hoped that the Proclamation would be carried out in that spirit.

Bishop Moore . . said that he had heard that Mr. Gandhi was disturbed over reports of Christian missionary work in Travancore, and that he was ready to remove any misunderstanding that it was possible for him to remove

Gandhiji said that he was indeed surprised at the report of conversions of thousands of people in the Telugu country and in Travancore made in Bishop Pickett's speech in England and in a statement of the Church Missionary Society appealing for funds over the signature of Prebendary Cash. He could not understand how responsible Christians could make extravagant statements to the effect that thousands had experienced a spiritual awakening and accepted the Gospel. The Bishop of Dornakal had even stated that those thousands included not only the Depressed Classes but a large number of so-called high-caste Hindus. Gandhiji said he had challenged the truth of these statements in the columns of *Harijan*[2] and had invited them to prove that he was wrong. He had also met leaders working in Andhra and asked them to make inquiries into the truth of these extravagant statements.

Bishop Moore confessed that he had not read either the appeal for funds or Bishop Pickett's speech and could not, therefore, express any opinion thereon. He was quite sure, however, that no responsible missionary journal

[1] The interview took place at Bishop Moore's house at Kottayam. The object was to clear up misunderstandings.

[2] *Vide* "What Is a Miracle?", pp. 149-51.

should ever publish statements that were not based on actual facts, and he wanted to assure Mr. Gandhi that no wrong information had ever been supplied from his diocese for which alone he could speak.

During the last year they could record 530 persons as having been baptized into the Anglican faith.

Bishop Abraham said he had been to the Andhra country and had seen with his own eyes that there was a tremendous awakening there even among the middle-class *savarnas*. . . . he had addressed meetings which were attended by many of the high-caste people

GANDHIJI: But that means nothing. Hundreds of students attend meetings addressed by Dr. Stanley Jones, but they cannot be said to seek conversion to Christianity. To say that hundreds attended meetings addressed by Christian preachers is very different from saying that hundreds have accepted the message of Jesus and from making an appeal for money in anticipation of people becoming Christians in large numbers.

Mr Kuruvilla here put in whether Mr. Gandhi had any objection to their stimulating and responding to the spiritual hunger of people.

Gandhiji said it was wholly irrelevant to the issue.

Bishop Abraham said they were responding to the spiritual hunger of the people. Mr. Gandhi could have no objection to that?

Gandhiji said he could have no objection to responding to spiritual hunger, provided it was genuinely felt and expressed. But the matter was quite irrelevant to the discussion which was entirely about extravagant statements made by responsible people. He said to Bishop Moore that he would furnish him with a copy of the C.M.S statement and he would like to know what Bishop Moore would have to say regarding it.

Harijan, 13-3-1937

294. *SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, KOTTAYAM*[1]

January 19, 1937

I am delighted to address for the first time during my pilgrimage a women's meeting. I should therefore have given you much longer time and tried to make fuller acquaintance of you who have gathered together in such a larger number and where, for the first time, a sister has made her reception speech in Hindi. I thank you both for the welcome and for the Hindi address. I

[1] Gandhiji delivered this speech in Hindi.

shall rest content with saying a few words on the Proclamation. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, who will speak to you after I have done, will address herself to women's problems as you may know that she is the Secretary of the All-India Women's Conference.

I have often said that untouchability is a great blot on Hinduism and one that threatened the very life of Hinduism. The Proclamation has come in very good time to enable us to wipe out the blot. But by itself it cannot do so. The Maharaja's work was finished with the Proclamation. It is for you to root out untouchability by carrying the Proclamation into full effect. This work of carrying through the process of purification devolves principally on *savarna* Hindus. I have often said that it is women alone who can be protectors of religion inasmuch as they are the custodians of the purity of the people. It is particularly women's work, because the purification of religion is ultimately a matter of the purification of one's heart. And if the women have realized the true spirit of the Proclamation, they can give better effect to it than men. We have up to now regarded *avarnas* as untouchables, not only in our homes and our temples, but in our hearts. We have to regard them as our own kith and kin. If, therefore, there is anyone amongst you who thinks that the Maharaja has defiled the Hindu religion and the temples by issuing this Proclamation, she will err against humanity and her Maker. I must tell you that these temples were impure so long as the temple doors were closed against Harijans. This Proclamation has purified them all. None of you will, therefore, cease to go to these temples in the belief that they have been defiled. I hope that you will discard that superstition and fraternize with Harijan women and actively help in raising them to a level of social equality with you.

The Epic of Travancore, pp. 213-5

295. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KOTTAYAM[1]

January 19, 1937

I know that this great assemblage is one of the many signs of rejoicings over the Proclamation which H. H. the Maharaja has given to the people of Travancore. Whilst it was but natural and

[1] The meeting was held in front of the Krishna temple and was attended by about 1,000 people. *The Hindu*, 20-1-1937, also carried a report of the speech.

your duty to tender congratulations to Their Highnesses and the Dewan, it would be wholly wrong if you exhausted your effort with these celebrations. Let your congratulations to Their Highnesses be an earnest of your determination to make every effort to make the Proclamation as successful as human effort can make it. As I have suggested at various gatherings, the main burden of successfully working out the Proclamation must fall on the shoulders of those who have been regarded as *savarnas*. It is they who have to carry the message of liberation and hope to the desolate homes of those who are miscalled *avarnas*. It is their privilege and their duty to approach the humble huts of the so-called *avarna* brothers and sisters and take the message to them in a humble and prayerful mood. That would be some measure, however tardy, of reparation for wrongs done to those whom we have suppressed. It is and should be their proud privilege to stoop in order to raise those whom they have helped to sink lower and lower from day to day. So much today for the *savarna* Hindus.

I know Kottayam is a stronghold of the Christians of Travancore. Christians know there is between them and me an invisible but unbreakable bond. I venture, therefore, to suggest to Indian Christians, whether they are born Christians or have been converted to Christianity, that they too may not stand aside but take part in advancing the cause that the Proclamation implies. And as briefly as possible I propose to tell you what I mean. That document abolishes all distinctions between high and low that reigned supreme in Travancore as in other parts of India. If a human document can raise by a stroke of the pen all *avarnas* to the status of the *savarnas*—and this Proclamation does really do so—then the Christians in the State owe a duty to the Hindus which they dare not neglect. If you believe with me, as I know a large body of Christian opinion today does believe, that all the principal religions of the world are true, then you will aid *savarna* Hindus in the process of penitence and reparation they are expected to go through under the Proclamation.

It undoubtedly grieved me when some of the Depressed Classes felt in disgust towards Hinduism like going out of Hinduism and embracing some other faith. It was a matter of equal grief to me to hear of efforts made by people belonging to different faiths to catch, as it were, the Depressed Classes and remove them from the faith to which they have belonged for centuries. If you believe, as I know some do, that Hinduism is nothing but a body of hideous usages and superstitions, that Hinduism is a fraud upon humanity, then you cannot render better service to the *avarna*

and *savarna* Hindus than by exposing this 'fraud'. In the estimation of those who so believe, this Proclamation is an act which it would be their duty to resist and to show to the Maharaja that by issuing the Proclamation of liberation he is simply prolonging the agony and giving a new lease of life to a body of superstitions which were bound to die their natural death. But I know many Christians throughout the length and breadth of India do not regard Hinduism as a fraud upon humanity or a body of bad usages and superstitions. A religion which has produced Ramakrishna, Chaitanya, Shankara and Vivekanand cannot be a body of superstitions. As you know, and if you do not know it I want to declare, that I personally hold all principal religions of the world to be not only true but also to be equal.

I have endeavoured to study the Bible with the eyes of a devout Christian and the Koran with the eyes of a devout Mussalman, and I have not hesitated to assimilate whatever I have found to be good in both these scriptures. I have studied other scriptures of the world also. But I have singled these out for the sake of illustration. But, you might well ask, if I declare all these religions to be equally true and equally demanding my respect, what is the meaning of my remaining a Hindu? I shall tell you why. Latterly I have been endeavouring to describe to vast assemblages of men and women I have addressed what I regard as the essence of Hinduism, and I have been suggesting to them one incredibly simple *mantra* of the *Ishopanishad* and, as you know, it is one of the Upanishads that enjoy the sanctity of the Vedas. The very first verse of the *Ishopanishad* means simply this: God pervades everything that is to be found in this universe down to the tiniest atom. The *mantra* describes God as the Creator, the Ruler and the Lord. The seer to whom this *mantra* or verse was revealed was not satisfied with the magnificent statement that God was to be found everywhere. But he went further and said: 'Since God pervades everything nothing belongs to you, not even your own body. God is the undisputed, unchallengeable Master of everything you possess.' And so when a person who calls himself a Hindu goes through the process of regeneration or a second birth, as Christians would call it, he has to perform a dedication or renunciation of all that he has in ignorance called his own property. And then when he has performed this act of dedication or renunciation, he is told that he will win a reward in the shape of God taking good care of what he will require for food, clothing or housing. Therefore the condition of enjoyment or use of the

necessaries of life is their dedication or renunciation. And that dedication or renunciation has got to be done from day to day, lest we may in this busy world forget the central fact of life. And to crown all, the seer says: 'Covet not anybody's riches.' I suggest to you that the truth that is embedded in this very short *mantra* is calculated to satisfy the highest cravings of every human being—whether they have reference to this world or to the next. I have in my search of the scriptures of the world found nothing to add to this *mantra*. Looking back upon all the little I have read of the scriptures—it is precious little I confess—I feel that everything good in all the scriptures is derived from this *mantra*. If it is universal brotherhood—not only brotherhood of all human beings, but of all living beings—I find it in this *mantra*. If it is unshakable faith in the Lord and Master—and all the adjectives you can think of—I find it in this *mantra*. If it is the idea of complete surrender to God and of the faith that He will supply all that I need, then again I say I find it in this *mantra*. Since He pervades every fibre of my being and of all of you, I derive from it the doctrine of equality of all creatures on earth and it should satisfy the cravings of all philosophical communists. This *mantra* tells me that I cannot hold as mine anything that belongs to God, and if my life and that of all who believe in this *mantra* has to be a life of perfect dedication, it follows that it will have to be a life of continual service of our fellow creatures.

This, I say, is my faith and should be the faith of all who call themselves Hindus. And I venture to suggest to my Christian and Mussalman friends that they will find nothing more in their scriptures if they will search them, and I want the aid of everybody on earth—whether he is a Christian or a Mussalman or what else—to help the Hindus of Travancore to realize the lofty purpose that lies in this *mantra*. I do not wish to hide from you the fact that I am not unaware of many superstitions that go under the name of Hinduism. I am most painfully conscious of all superstitions that are to be found masquerading as Hinduism and I have no hesitation to call a spade a spade. I have not hesitated to describe untouchability as the greatest of these superstitions. But in spite of them all, I remain a Hindu. For I do not believe that these superstitions form part of Hinduism. The very canons of interpretation laid down by Hinduism teach me that whatever is inconsistent with the truth I have expounded to you and what is hidden in the *mantra* I have named, must be summarily rejected as not belonging to Hinduism. And I want you non-Hindus to help the so-called *savarna* Hindus to spread this truth in the midst

of those whom they have hitherto regarded as untouchables, unapproachables, invisibles.

I felt that I could not do justice to this great meeting, especially a meeting that is held in a Christian stronghold, unless I was prepared to utter a truth I held dear as life itself. We all consciously or unconsciously pine and strive for peace on earth and goodwill amongst mankind. I am convinced that we shall find neither peace nor goodwill among men and women through strife among men of different religions, through disputation among them. We shall find truth and peace and goodwill if we approach the humblest of mankind in a prayerful spirit. Anyway that is my humble appeal to Christians who may be present in this great meeting. It is a privilege that may not occur again to any of you in your lifetime. As I have said so often elsewhere, whilst the hand that traced the signature on the Proclamation was that of the Maharaja, the spirit that moved him to do so was that of God. Would to God that that spirit might also fire everyone in Travancore to realize the implications of this Proclamation and to fire every one of you to advance the cause that the Proclamation enunciates.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the exemplary silence with which you have listened to my speech.

Harijan, 30-1-1937

296. SPEECH AT CHANGANACHERI

January 20, 1937

It is the partiality of the President of the Travancore Harijan Sevak Sangh that has made it possible for you to read one of your addresses. I do not wonder at his partiality, because Changanacheri is his place. But then I see that this address is an entrapping address, because if it really represents your views the partiality of the President can be easily excused. This is the very comforting statement that you have made in your address: "Our religion has been purified." Then you proceed to say. "All social inequalities have been removed. Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man has been established and we are in the happy land of *Ramarajya* in every sense of the term." Well, if I was an inhabitant of Changanacheri and this address was read in my name and I had been asked to sign it, I should

have to undergo various night of vigil before I could subscribe to the statements therein. If you had rested content with saying that all these things had been implied in the Proclamation, of which you have spoken in enthusiastic terms, it would have been quite in place and I should have said that you were right in reading all these implications in the Proclamation and that God might help you to live up to those implications. But you have with a due sense of responsibility gone forward to make the bold assertions I have read out to you. I know you have made them in pardonable enthusiasm. But now I would ask you to abide by your statements and prove the validity of the assertions made here by your worthy conduct. I should not wonder if you were to prove equal to the assertions you have made here, because, as you have given me the information, this is a Nambudiri stronghold and this is a private Nambudiri temple that they have generously and whole-heartedly opened to the Harijans. The way to live up to every assertion is by every individual doing these very things in his or her own life, and I tell you that a life of spirituality truly lived is far more infectious than all the microbes put together can prove on this earth. And whereas we dread all these infections and would rather escape them, this is an infection which we would all welcome.

Let me hope and pray that all that you have said in this address may prove true in Travancore, and if it does so, I promise that it will prove true in the whole of India.

The Epic of Travancore, pp. 222-3

297. SPEECH AT THIRUVALLA[1]

January 20, 1937

Lest I should forget them, you have been good enough to remind me of my many virtues. If I had them, really they would have taken care of themselves without your reminding me of them. And I am none the wiser for having been reminded of them. But one thing you have omitted to do which was really necessary. After reminding me of my virtues, you have gone into raptures over the Proclamation but you have failed to tell me what you propose to do with the Proclamation. As I have been telling at every meeting, it is not the Maharaja's work, it is the work of every man and woman in Travancore to do his or her duty, viz., to go

[1] This was in reply to several addresses presented to Gandhiji at this place.

down to the dens of Harijans, pull them out of them and raise them to the same status and level that you occupy in society. Not till then will you have done your duty in terms of the Proclamation.

The Epic of Travancore, p. 225

298. SPEECH AT CHENGANOOR

January 20, 1937

I am grateful to you for the address[1] that you have given to me. Of course it is all very well for you to present me with addresses. They have their value if they are properly coined and presented with the proper spirit behind them. When I say that they should be properly coined, I say that they should express the sentiment you really cherish. They should not contain fulsome praise of those to whom you present the address, but what you have done or are about to do should be stated therein for the information of the person to whom you present the address. And today, as the central theme of our rejoicing is the graceful Proclamation issued by the Maharaja, naturally you will express your aspirations and actions in terms of this Proclamation. And it does not matter in the least whether it is from the little children or from the Hindu public or the Youth League. You have not really drafted your address in that way but that does not matter. I am here to remind you of things that are expected of you not only by the Maharaja and the Maharani, but of the things that the whole of India expects you to do. At the present moment the whole of India is really dumbfounded. It does not know whether such a thing could happen in this age. Orthodoxy is shaken to its foundations. It trembles to think of the consequences, not in a spirit of hostility by any means, but it is no doubt filled with suspicion and amazement. It wonders whether untouchability was not after all a sin and a crime against humanity. Now I can tell you what can be a net result of this doubt having entered the orthodox mind. One of the results is bound to follow, and it will wholly depend upon the condition of the *savarna* Hindus. The doubts of the orthodoxy will be dispelled like the morning mist at sunrise if the orthodoxy can really see that the *savarnas* of Travancore have washed themselves of the sin of untouchability. On the contrary, if they come to know or feel that you are not playing the game

[1] This had been presented to Gandhiji by the Nambudiris of Tazhman Mathan temple.

and that you are secretly harbouring untouchability in your hearts, then the orthodoxy will also harden their hearts. You will admit that such a result will be worse than that in which we are. Therefore let not the enthusiasm that I have seen vanish like smoke immediately these celebrations are over. On the contrary let it be said of you, *savarna* Hindus, that you have harnessed the energy born of this enthusiasm for the purification of Hinduism. And I am flattering myself with the belief that I am leaving with you the golden key for the solution of all the difficulties that may linger in your hearts. And that is to remember the first verse of the *Ishopanishad* and forget all about other scriptures. You can really drown yourself and be suffocated in the ocean of literature known as the scriptures. They are good for the learned and the wise, for they will humbly approach them, but I am sure that for the ordinary man in the street they are nothing but a burden. It is not I who say these things, it is what those who wrote these scriptures have said. I shall therefore leave this meeting with a free translation of that *mantra*. It simply means this: "God pervades everything that we see." Therefore it is literally true what the Western science tells us, that Nature abhors a vacuum, for there is nothing on earth where God is not. And if He occupies everything that is, there is nothing for us to occupy. Therefore, the *mantra* says: "You must renounce everything." But it does not say: "Renounce everything and perish." On the contrary it says: "Renounce everything if you want to live." For that act of renunciation or dedication to God will result in God taking the responsibility of feeding you, of housing you and of clothing you. And then the *mantra* closes with this beautiful advice or injunction: "Do not covet anybody's riches." That does not mean that you must not take away these addresses from me. But it means that your eyes must be single and pure, otherwise you would be criminals. There never was anything yours nor could there be. That applies to all our organs and if you follow what I say, action in terms of the Proclamation will be easy. If you understand this formula of Hinduism—this distilled wisdom of all the sages that lived—you will go and fraternize with Harijans, pull them out of their dens and raise them to the same social level that you enjoy.

The Epic of Travancore, pp. 225-8

299. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

ARANMULA,
January 20, 1937

CHI. MIRA,

I have your two long letters. I understand what you say in them. I do not know that I shall be able to give more time to the village work than I am giving My life has to be taken with its amazing limitations It is enough that I live in the village and think out things in terms of the village. I must act as opportunity comes.

I do not mind Harijans working in the kitchen. Of course the attitude towards them has to be progressively as towards members of the same family. I am satisfied that that attitude is there. It only requires growing emphasis.

As to Munnalal he will leave if he is not satisfied with the work as it comes to him. I have to be patient.

I am glad you are quicker than before. I still expect to reach there on 24th.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C W 6376. Courtesy. Mirabehn. Also G N. 9842

300. SPEECH AT ARANMULA

January 20, 1937

The scene at this meeting is a visible demonstration of the fact that what I am just now doing is nothing but a pilgrimage. There is the river Pampa, there is the temple and here are thousands of people gathered together to rejoice over the Proclamation. Such are the scenes which are witnessed during the progress of pilgrims all over India. But then, if pilgrimages are undoubtedly matters that furnish joy for the soul, they must at the same time continue to remind us that we should purify ourselves continually in order to satisfy our Maker. All the more so because of the gracious Proclamation that His Highness the Maharaja has given us.

I know that here we are all Harijans and non-Harijans united without the slightest distinction. It is well if our hearts are also

equally united. But if they are not united and we cherish all kinds of distinctions that have for ages past disfigured Hindu. society, we are unworthy of that great Proclamation. Great is the responsibility that lies upon the shoulders of those who hitherto regarded themselves as belonging to the superior castes. The Proclamation invites such people to descend from the pedestal which they have occupied with no credit but with utter discredit to themselves and the faith which they have hopelessly misrepresented. Let me therefore hope and pray that all who have been called *savarna* Hindus will make the determination to get rid of untouchability from their hearts and make common cause with those whom they have suppressed for ages.

I must, as the pilgrimage is about to finish, put before you for your consideration and assimilation the *Ishopanishad* which I have been doing for the last four or five days. Let that *mantra* be your guide and your inspiration in everything you do. Its meaning can be understood by even a little child and it is this: God pervades the tiniest atom in this mighty universe, and seeing that He is the sole Ruler and indispensable Master of everything that can be conceived and that there is in this universe, we are called upon to dedicate everything to Him. In our ignorance we have fancied that so many things belong to us and that we possess them to the exclusion of everybody else. So long as we entertain such a belief, we are not really Hindus, though being born of Hindu parants we may call ourselves Hindus. Therefore, to be truly, deliberately and consciously Hindus, we have got to act according to this key *mantra* of all Upanishads and the whole of Hinduism and renounce everything, even our body, and all that we hold near and dear to us, and dedicate it at the feet of God. Then the *mantra* says if you do this, but not otherwise, God will give you your daily bread, a house to live in and clothes to cover your limbs with. And it proceeds further by saying that since God is all powerful and nothing is impossible for Him and since you have surrendered everything to Him, He is not going to neglect you. And hence you shall not covet anything that belongs to others, even a needle.

Now you can easily understand that in the presence of God, the Ruler of the Universe, who pervades everything—even those whom we have called the lowest of the low—all are equal. So you will see how necessary it was for His Highness to issue this Proclamation, if he was to make good his title to be called a Hindu prince.

Now as I leave you I would like to leave this *mantra* with you, and if anybody challenges you and says anything in the name of Hinduism which is contrary to this *mantra*, you can tell him that you know everything about Hinduism and everything contrary to it is not Hinduism.

The Epic of Travancore, pp 229-31

301. SPEECH AT ELANTHOOR

January 20, 1937

This is a typical village. I tender you my congratulations for having of your own initiative got rid of untouchability even before the issue of the Proclamation. The Proclamation now sets the seal of approval upon your work and makes your work acceptable to the whole of Travancore. Now if your village has been as advanced as you claim it to be in this address, I would expect marvellous results in virtue of this Proclamation. And I would tell you what I would expect you to do. It will not satisfy me—it ought not to satisfy you—that isolated Hindus calling themselves *savarnas* mix with those whom they call *avarnas*. I would now expect not only you, but the whole village, and all the surrounding villages, to forget all distinctions between Ezhavas, Pulayas, Pariahs and others, and that even in your hearts you do not harbour any such distinction. If you will do this, I will also expect that there will be no Harijans perishing for want of food or clothing or for want of opportunities for education. I would expect your schools to be attended by Harijans as much as by non-Harijans. I hope you will bring about this result in no time.

If this Proclamation has, as if by magic, changed the hearts of the so-called *savarnas*, then you will not measure the progress of the so-called Harijans—socially, morally, economically—in driblets. But the progress will be so phenomenal that it will be noticed by any observer in the way. In my opinion that is the implication of the Proclamation and nothing else. May I hope that you will live up to this implication?

The Epic of Travancore, pp. 232-3

302. SPEECH AT PANDALAM[1]

January 20, 1937

Many glorious meetings I have had in Travancore have now accustomed me to meetings, however large they may be, and to what I may call pin-drop silence. It is a unique phenomenon that I have witnessed in this pilgrimage of mine. I have a vivid and happy recollection of meetings addressed in Travancore during my three previous visits. I well remember they were very orderly and gave me great satisfaction. But somehow or other this being in my opinion a purely religious pilgrimage of a humble penitent, I have been in need of perfect silence and I have been amply rewarded for my prayers.

At Kottayam I saw before me about this time last evening a vast assemblage of men and women whose number no one could calculate. It was a sea of human faces. I simply approached it in fear and trembling, because there was unfortunately no microphone arrangement there. The organizers had tried their best to make the arrangement, but they had failed. And yet, you will be pleased to learn from me that in that meeting, which was nearly ten times as large as this, there was wonderful silence for an hour or more. I was amazed at this absolutely unexpected silence and patience of thousands of men and women at this vast meeting. I am not mentioning these facts in order to satisfy idle curiosity or fill in the idle moments. I mention this in order to emphasize the fact that these meetings have a religious character, and I hope I am not wrong to infer from the behaviour of these vast crowds that they were fired within, perhaps unconsciously, by a religious spirit. Whatever may have been the cause of this divine silence that you have given me, I know that for me there can be no other meaning.

I have regarded this Proclamation as an act of Divinity, though outwardly it is the act of a great prince Any man, if possible even braver than the young Maharaja and his wise mother, would have quailed if he had reasoned out the pros and cons of a Proclamation of this character, and yet it was this young Maharaja who signed the Proclamation which was complete for

[1] A report of the speech also appeared in *Harijan*, 6-2-1937.

the purpose for which it was intended. And therefore it is that I have often said that though it was his hand that put the signature to the Proclamation, the spirit behind it was that of God working through the Maharaja. Having, therefore, looked at the Proclamation in that light and having approached this pilgrimage in fear and trembling, I have pined for the opening out of your hearts. I have not made a conscious effort to make any appeal to your reason, but I have made a conscious effort to make an appeal to your hearts and penetrate them, and unless I have deluded myself I fancy that I have made some approaches to your hearts. Whether I have done so or not, I want to repeat what I have said at the previous meetings: that the burden of carrying out the Proclamation in letter and in spirit rests principally on *savarna* Hindus. And the implication is emphatically this, that the *savarna* Hindus have to forget their wrong understanding of the message of Hinduism and the distinctions that they have up to now drawn between themselves and the *avarna* Hindus. The Proclamation emphatically means that untouchability, unapproachability and unseeability are all relics of the past and that those Hindus who have arrogated superiority for themselves will forget that they were superior human beings and will remember that they are the children of the same God and that all *savarnas* and *avarnas* are equal. The Proclamation is addressed to every Hindu, and every one of you is expected to show that he has understood it and he has to carry it out in his day-to-day dealings with those whom he has hitherto regarded as Pariahs of society. I do not propose to carry on this appeal to the *savarna* Hindus any further tonight.

The Maharaja had nothing to do beyond issuing the Proclamation. It was cent per cent truthful in so far as one would want to know his opinion in regard to untouchability. So far as I can see, there is nothing to amplify the Proclamation. Therefore, in your presence I propose to address a few words to His Highness, Her Highness and to their advisers.

Great as this Proclamation is and great as is its religious merit, greater still is the responsibility that His Highness has taken upon his shoulders, and also that of his advisers. Whilst without the effort of every *savarna* Hindu the Proclamation can undoubtedly be rendered ineffective, I must also say that the Proclamation will not have its full effect unless it is backed in an ample measure by State action. So far as I can see the Proclamation demands State activities in all departments of life. Of these I propose to take the religious first; because from it must follow

activities in all the other departments. Temples have been matters of indifference, except to women, who have no capital save divine faith, and to men who from many mixed motives have been going to them. They have been neglected by what may be called the intelligentsia. The result has been that they have almost ceased to be repositories of Hinduism and have ceased to impart spiritual power to those who have followed the faith. They have ceased to shed unmistakable spiritual fragrance in and about and around them. Then I venture to suggest that it is the duty of the State or of the Maharaja—if there is any distinction between the two, for he is the custodian of the vast majority of Hindu temples—that he should see to it that the temples are renovated spiritually and have the authority and sanctity that they used undoubtedly to have at one time. And I believe that it can only be done if they are in charge of priests who know what they have to do, who know something of the sanctity of them and of the duties to which they are called. In other words, they should not be ignorant people following their calling for a livelihood but they should be men who are proud of their privilege of bringing the message of God to temple-goers, showing by their own conduct and their life that these temples are abodes of Divinity.

Then there should be the correct kind of instruction given in these temples. The Harijans will be taken by the hand by someone in charge of temples and they will be told what they are expected to gain by temple-worship. This means undoubtedly, according to modern thought, a revolution in the upkeep and conduct of these temples. But the Proclamation itself is nothing short of a revolutionary document and if that revolution is to touch, as it ought to touch, the lives of all Hindus, naturally temples have to be abodes of the living God and not abodes of a mere mass of gold or other metals worked into figures. Then I should expect a history of these temples, understandable by the common folk, to be distributed free or at a cheap price to all who want to know what these temples are. That means a training school for training the right kind of teachers who will be entrusted with the religious training of the people. If some such thing does not happen, I fear that the purpose of the Proclamation, viz., to expect and to induce lakhs and lakhs of Harijans to go to these temples in a religious spirit, will fail.

So much for the religious department. Then I take the economic. The economic life of the Harijans has got to be lifted out of its miserable state. I venture to think that by a judicious and thoughtful working out of the programme, it can be prosecuted

in a short time and with a limited financial outlay, in such a manner that Harijans may be easily able to hold their own by being taught to turn an honest *chakram*. Nor can the State now dare neglect the mental training—I mean literary—of these people. I know to my cost that today it is very difficult to carry on a connected conversation with Pulayas and Pariahs so that you can get a ready response even about simple facts of life.

Similarly, the State has to raise the social status of these people. They should be invited to all State occasions and functions, as for instance Durbars. They must not be allowed to feel that these functions are a sealed book to them, and that they should have to have another agitation before they can attain a social status entitling them to be invited or allowed to take part in those functions. But if the Proclamation bears the meaning I have given to it, then the social uplift of the Harijans has to come as if by magic, as the religious status of going to the temples has come.

In my humble opinion, in suggesting this fourfold programme of the uplift of the Harijans in the State I have not suggested any programme beyond the capacity or resources of a State like Travancore.

But having addressed these few words to the State in all humility, I want to come back to you. The State may resolve to do all these things, but its resolution will not mean the coming in of manpower in order to carry out all these things. And if, from the few words I have addressed to Their Highnesses and their advisers, you think that after all it is Their Highnesses who have to do everything and you have to do nothing, then I am afraid that my labours will have gone in vain. The requisite manpower has got to be supplied by you, and as a man of experience I will tell you that manpower cannot come by offers of money. Thus, for instance, men who are capable of taking the management of temples cannot be had by offering scholarships of hundreds of rupees. For such people have got to be fired by a religious spirit, by love of their own work, and should therefore be ready to work for a bare maintenance. It should be their proud privilege to take this training and to fit themselves for this highest task in life. Similarly, unless the State gets men required for giving Harijans educational training, the State can do nothing.

After all, there is a world of meaning about the title that the Maharajas of Travancore have adopted for themselves, viz., *Padmanabhadas*. They pride themselves in calling themselves servants of God, but that means that they are also servants of their

people. So, as I said at one of these meetings, the Maharajas are not the first lords among the people of Travancore, but they are the first servants among the people who are also servants. But the first servants of the people will fare badly unless they are ably assisted by the people who are their fellow servants. Therefore the meaning of His Highness the Maharaja going to the temple every day and taking instructions as to his daily duties from Shri Padmanabhaswami means nothing less than that he should be assisted by his people for their own good—spiritual, religious, social, economic.

The Epic of Travancore, pp. 234-40

303. SPEECH AT KOTTARAKARA

January 21, 1937

It is a matter of great joy to be invited to open this private temple. Our friend Sjt. K. M. M. Narayan Nambudiripad deserves the very best congratulations from me, and I hope you will associate yourselves with me in giving him congratulations for following the great example of His Highness the Maharaja. Thereby he is simply living up to the best traditions of Hinduism. He is, therefore, by opening this and seventeen other temples belonging to him, rendering a distinct service in the process of purification of Hinduism. I have great pleasure in declaring the temple open.

The Epic of Travancore, p 241

304. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KOTTARAKARA

January 21, 1937

This is the very last stage of my pilgrimage in Travancore. I said elsewhere that I came here with great hesitation, equal reluctance, and in fear and trembling; and but for the very pressing and urgent wire of Sjt. Govindan you would not have seen me in your midst today. The telegrams were sent under the joint signatures of Sjt. Govindan and Sjt. Ramachandran. But Ramachandran being a child of Sabarmati, I might not have listened to him; but I dreaded the signature of an ex-judge of Travancore and, more than that, a leader of the Ezhavas. And so at last very reluctantly I capitulated; but having done so,

am free to confess that I am very glad that I capitulated. I am taking away with me spiritual treasures of which I had not dreamt before. Your magnificent temples were as much closed against me, by a voluntary effort on my part, as they were against the tallest amongst the Ezhavas, Pulayas and Pariahs, who were until the other day despised by the *savarna* Hindus. But having found the doors of these temples flung open by the very generous act of His Highness, I entered them with the same joy that must have been felt by the thousands of Ezhavas, Pulayas and Pariahs who must have gone to these temples since the Proclamation. After having entered responsible [*sic*] life, I cannot say that I ever was a habitual temple-goer. But the possibility for spiritual growth by entering these temples in a spiritual and devotional mood has dawned upon me, as it never before had, after all these visits to these temples in a devotional and prayerful mood. But, of course, one needs a proper attitude of mind before one can derive the highest consolation and spiritual joy from visiting these temples. As it is, I have just now come from having performed the opening ceremony of a private temple belonging to Sjt. K. M. M. Narayan Nambudiripad. The ceremony of opening this temple was equal to opening his other temples in Travancore, and I derived the keenest joy in the privilege to open this temple. I have opened several temples before now, but I cannot say that I had such joy in opening those temples. I had missed in those temples the presence of God. There seemed to me to be a kind of artificiality about the opening of those temples. Here, on the contrary, wherever I have gone, I have seen a spontaneity that I was not prepared for. Nor was I prepared for thousands of people waiting for my entry in these temples. No doubt they had come in order to see what must have been to them a zoological specimen. But I am quite certain that that was not the sole motive in thousands of them coming here and standing in silent and absolutely devotional mood. A scoffer and a sceptic might be easily misled in saying that all this is a figment of my imagination, and has no correspondence to reality. But if such is really the case, I am here to tell you that the whole of my life and growth are due to such figments of imagination and it would be true at least to say of me that I have needed these figments for my growth. And after all imagination is not such a despicable thing that you can neglect it altogether in mundane affairs of life.

Whatever it may be, I leave this word with you that if you will translate the Proclamation that His Highness the Maharaja, guided by Padmanabhaswami, has given you, you will have to

identify yourselves completely with all and abolish the distinctions of high and low, *savarnas* and *avarnas*; and in order to assist you to do so, I want to translate for you the verse I have been putting before the people for the last four or five days. The meaning of that verse is this: God the Ruler, our Master and Lord, pervades everything in the universe down to the tiniest atom. It means that He is not merely in your heart or my heart but he is literally and absolutely in every one of the innumerable pores of our skin and the hair of our head. And, therefore, He is nearer to you and to me than our dearest ones. Then the first essential of Hinduism is that we realize the truth of this magnificent statement as we realize that we are sitting here and you are listening to me. Having realized the truth, the seer proceeds to say that since God is so near to us and dominates all our actions, we must voluntarily renounce and dedicate at His feet all that we have regarded as our own. But even after that act of conscious and deliberate dedication and renunciation, we shall want to eat, clothe ourselves and house ourselves, and so the seer says you can only after this dedication use these necessaries of life as if they were given to you by God Himself. That requires the same trust, the same faith and the same love that a child without reasoning it out for himself has for his parents. He never reasons out for himself that it is all well with them and for him so long as his parents are there and so long as they continue to anticipate and supply his wants. Our parents are as much mortal as we ourselves, and therefore it is infinitely more logical and necessary for us that we should have as much faith in God to anticipate and supply our wants. And having told us these three things, the seer proceeds to warn us against coveting anybody's possessions. Now you will see that if we believe in this *mantra*—and every Hindu is bound to believe in it—there would be no distinctions like those which have been sapping the very foundations of Hinduism and Hindu society.

Now you can also at once realize why temples are and must be an integral part of our lives. We are so easily forgetful of our obligations that we have to renew our vows of loyalty to God, renew our renunciation and dedication from day to day. These temples are the visible symbols of God's power and authority. They are, therefore, truly called the houses of God, the houses of prayer. We go there in a prayerful mood and perform, first thing in the morning after ablutions, the act of dedication and surrender. Scoffers and sceptics may say that all these are figments of imagination, that we are imagining God in the images

we see. I will say to these scoffers that it is so. I am not ashamed of confessing that imagination is a powerful factor in life. The temple is not a house of God for, say, my cow, although the cow is as much my fellow-being as any human being. But God has not blessed the cow with imagination, and her presence in the temple has no effect on her, but my presence has a well-defined effect, because I have imagined that the particular temple contains the presence of God.

Therefore, I would love to leave this *mantra* with you and tell you that whatever is inconsistent with this *mantra* you must summarily reject as not Hinduism, and having assimilated all that there is in this *mantra*, you need not worry about other books that pass by the name of Hindu scriptures. Far be it from me to suggest that all else is absolutely worthless or harmful. There are undoubtedly worthless things that are current as Hindu Shastras, but there are also priceless treasures hidden in these books. But you and I have not the time to study them and even if you had the time, I would utter a word of caution to the effect that if a study of the scriptures confuses your mind, it would be well to leave them alone and derive your comfort from this *mantra* to the exclusion of everything else.

And now with a brief reference to my happy experience in Travancore and courteous performance of the obligation that a visitor owes to his hosts, I shall close the proceedings.

I and the whole of my company owe a deep debt of gratitude to the organizers of this pilgrimage who left no stone unturned to make it as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. I am deeply grateful to Their Highnesses and to Sachivottama Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar for having extended to me and to my party the hospitality of the State. Naturally this hospitality made my passage through Travancore—and it has been such a rush—free of difficulties and afforded me comforts which otherwise I should not have received. But more than to these high personages and the managers of this pilgrimage, our thanks are due to those who were in actual charge of my day-to-day programme. For instance, the chauffeurs of the three cars that were placed at our disposal were unremitting in their attention, and I am happy to tell you that they did their work without a single untoward accident. They willingly did their work, never minding whether it was night or day. And so also did the cooks, for whom, I assure you, it was a laborious task to prepare our meals from stage to stage. We were never at one place for more than 24 hours. Almost invariably the breakfast had to be taken at one

place, the lunch at another place and the dinner at a third place. But these cooks were ever ready for the tasks allotted to them. And there was the officer in charge of these who accompanied us from Trivandrum and supervised everything. He has been equally unremitting in his attention and studiously courteous. But for the hearty co-operation of all these friends whom I have named, we could not have negotiated this pilgrimage without anyone of us getting ill.

And then I may not omit the Tahsildars at every place who were ready to render every assistance required. My thanks are due to every one of them and to others whom I may have inadvertently omitted to mention.

I am just reminded that I had neglected that necessary limb of the law, I mean the Police. The Police have not acted after the proverbial manner to which we are accustomed in India. They really acted in the most gentlemanly manner for which the Police in England are celebrated throughout the world. Whatever Englishmen may be here in India, the English Police constable in England is really a gentleman. I understand that every morning when he is sent out on duty, he is required to repeat the formula that he is not a master but a servant of the people. He has to deal courteously with innumerable people with whom he has to come in daily contact and he may not handle even criminals roughly. And as English law, like all law, requires that no man should be considered guilty unless he is so adjudged by law, the Police in England are taught to be courteous even to people who may be found guilty of murder and caught red-handed. And so you understand what high praise I am bestowing on the Police here when I say that they behaved in the same gentlemanly manner as they behave in London. Naturally, therefore, they are entitled to the same thanks that I have given to the others I mentioned before.

Lastly, I would thank you, the present audience, and ask you not to forget that the carrying out of the Proclamation rests with every one of you individually.

The Epic of Travancore, pp. 241-8

305. SUMMARY OF SPEECHES AT PRAYER MEETINGS IN TEMPLES[1]

[*January 12/21, 1937*][2]

I suppose it is true of temples in India—in the South as well as in the North—that there are courtyards attached to them where *bhajan* parties give their *bhajans* and teachers give their discourses. But what I propose to do here and what I have been doing for some days is somewhat different from what I have described to you.

Ever since my return to India we have had, in our Ashram and wherever I have gone, prayers about this time every evening, and I have been so very much enthused over my pilgrimage that I had been longing to have my prayers under the shadow of your grand temples. So I enquired of the trustees whether I could have a prayer meeting under the shadow of the presiding deity of the temple which I am visiting for the first time in my life. The permission was readily given and I am grateful to the trustees for it.

I shall now explain to you the various parts of the prayer we have every evening. I am going to commence by reciting the first verse of the *Ishopanishad* which I have been explaining at various meetings. I must give you the gist of the verse which I consider to be the bedrock of Hinduism without which Hinduism is nothing and with which Hinduism need not be anything else. God the Creator and Ruler pervades every atom, ever so tiny, in the universe, and therefore seeing that it is all God's and God pervades everything, we have to surrender everything and renounce everything in His favour and eat or enjoy or use just what He gives from day to day. The verse closes by saying: "Do not covet anybody's riches." There is nothing so satisfying and beautiful in all the scriptures of the world as this *mantra* and it enunciates a universal truth applicable to all.

This will be followed by a recitation of the 19 last verses of the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*. They tell us what we

[1] Mahadev Desai says: "Whenever we happened to be near a temple in the evening, we used to have our evening prayer in the temple precincts. Gandhiji explained everywhere in brief the meaning of various parts of the prayer This is what he said at these prayer meetings."

[2] Gandhiji was in Travancore from January 12 to January 21.

nature in Travancore cannot be different from Hindu nature elsewhere. After all, only a few months ago, nobody was prepared for the great event in Travancore. As a matter of fact, it was thought then that Travancore would not give the lead as it has bravely done; but that it would be the last to throw open its mighty temples to Harijans. But the unexpected has happened; and that constitutes a miracle of modern times. Travancore has shown the way and it would be a great pity if it is not followed, as I have suggested, by the other Indian States, and by British India, as Prof. Sundararaman has suggested.

The Hindu representative desired Gandhiji to say a word to the orthodox.

Of course, orthodox opinion can do a great deal. I see that some meetings have been held in Tamil Nad, disapproving of the Proclamation. I hope, however, that this disapproval is no proof of general disapproval by the orthodoxy. They ought to recognize the time spirit. No true religion can tolerate distinctions between man and man. The sooner, therefore, the orthodox people recognize the necessity of a change, the better it would be for the faith of which they regard themselves as special custodians. I hope, therefore, that they will follow the lead given by Prof. Sundararaman.

Replying to a question regarding the State action he desired to be taken, following the Proclamation, in the directions he mentioned in his speech at Pandalam, Gandhiji remarked:

It is not an ambitious programme. I have not the least doubt it can be easily worked. Only there must be the will.

The Hindu, 22-1-1937

307. SPEECH AT HARIJAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, KODAMBAKKAM

January 22, 1937

Gandhiji said that he was glad to remain in their midst even for a few hours. If they were wise and prudent, they ought to keep the premises of the institution spick and span He saw a number of cobwebs in the roofing and also pits in the compound. The residential students should see that these defects were removed. The management was paying a heavy rent of Rs. 40 per mensem for the building and if the students made a wise use of the place, they could get that amount out of it. Another thing he noticed was that

there was no spinning and weaving. If they took to spinning and weaving, say, at least, for an hour a day, it would doubly benefit them They could make their own cloth and sell also the extra cloth woven by them Those who were in control of this insitution should consider whether it was practicable to adopt his suggestion. He would like the inmates to remember the two things he had mentioned.

The Hindu, 23-1-1937

308. SPEECH AT KODAMBAKKAM

January 22, 1937

While I was in Travancore, offering prayers in the presence of huge assemblies, pin-drop silence prevailed. A divine silence pervaded the atmosphere. But here, even in this small assembly, there is not that silence. I do not think that the devotion I saw at Travancore was due to a fit of enthusiasm. If you here have, on a modest scale, that kind of religious spirit which is now in Travancore, you will also see the same silence pervading devotional meetings here. I hope you will remember it. If Hinduism in the future is to live as one of the great religions on earth, a religious revival such as the one in Travancore has got to be brought about throughout the length and breadth of India. I invite you to reason out the pros and cons of it by your individual conduct.

I shall now say a few words about the prayer recited. The first recital was of the last nineteen verses of the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*. These verses are being sung at evening prayers because they are reminders to every Hindu of how he should conduct himself on earth. The second part of the prayer is a *bhajan* from old saints, which is for those who do not understand Sanskrit. Since there are millions in this country who cannot even recite *bhajans*, our forefathers have discovered a method which is a mere recital of the name of God whom you recognize as Rama, Krishna or by thousands of other names. Then the last thing is a recitation from Tulsidas's *Ramayana*. This is a later introduction; since the village movement has been started, it has been found necessary to take some such thing to the villagers. Tulsidas's *Ramayana* is known to millions of Indians north of the Vindhya Range. I regard this *Ramayana* as one of the richest spiritual treasures that humanity possesses. Its music is lofty and its language equally lofty.

Some sort of evening prayer before retiring to bed is necessary. Just as we require food for the body, so also we require, in the shape of prayers, food for the soul, for we know and recognize that there is something besides our body. If you try prayer for some time sincerely, you will discover with me that whereas you may go without bodily food for some time, even with profit, you may not desire to go without the spiritual food. If prayers are offered both in the morning and evening, you will soon find that a time will come when you will be disgusted if you omit to offer prayers.

In conclusion, Gandhiji appealed to the gathering to give donations to the Harijan Institute which was doing useful work for the Harijans.

Small cash, jewels, watches and fountain pens were offered Gandhiji humorously asked Srimati Lakshmi, daughter of Mr. Satyamurti, "What are you going to give?" She immediately took out a pair of gold bangles from her hands and gave them to Gandhiji.

The Hindu, 23-1-1937

309. INTERVIEW TO AN EGYPTIAN[1]

[*January 22, 1937*][2]

QUESTION: What do you think of communism? Do you think it would be good for India?

ANSWER: Communism of the Russian type, that is communism which is imposed on a people, would be repugnant to India. I believe in non-violent communism.

Q. But communism in Russia is against private property. Do you want private property?

A. If communism came without any violence, it would be welcome. For then no property would be held by anybody except on behalf of the people and for the people. The millionaire may have his millions, but he will hold them for the people. The State could take charge of them whenever they would need them for the common cause.

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

[2] According to Mahadev Desai the interview took place when Gandhiji was preparing to go to bed because he was to get up at 3 o'clock the next morning to visit the cyclone-affected areas. This he did on January 23.

Q. Is there any difference of opinion between you and Jawaharlal in respect of socialism?

A. There is, but it is a difference in emphasis. He perhaps puts an emphasis on the result, whereas I put on the means. Perhaps according to him I am putting over-emphasis on non-violence, whereas he, though he believes in non-violence, would want to have socialism by other means if it was impossible to have it by non-violence. Of course my emphasis on non-violence becomes one of principle. Even if I was assured that we could have independence by means of violence, I shall refuse to have it. It won't be real independence.

Q. But do you think the English will leave India to you and go back peacefully as a result of your non-violent agitation?

A. I do think so.

Q. What is the basis of your belief?

A. I base my faith in God and His justice.

Q. You are more Christian than we so-called Christians. I will write these words down in block letters.

A. You must, otherwise God would not be God of Love but God of violence.

Harijan, 13-2-1937

310. SPEECH IN AN ANDHRA VILLAGE[1]

[*January 23, 1937*][2]

I want you to be strictly honest with me and tell me how many of you have suffered and how many have not. I have worked on many an occasion in distressed areas, e.g., in Bihar, where the distress was infinitely greater than here, but even there cent per cent people had not suffered. If several thousands had suffered, several hundreds had escaped Now I would ask such

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter". Mahadev Desai says: "Gandhiji was invited . . . to give a day for the cyclone area. Gandhiji could not resist the request . . . and he hurried through 129 miles from Nidubrole to Bezwada, taking on his way places like Chirala, Bapatla, Vetapalem, Gollapalem, Timmasundaram, Paruchuru, Chilakaluripeta and Guntur, making collections."

[2] According to *Gandhi—1915–1948*, Gandhiji was in Andhra on this date.

of you as have actually suffered to raise their hands.[1] I am glad, and I know that those who have suffered would not come to attend these meetings. I should have to go to them. Then please make the beginning, and those of you who have not suffered please pay for the sufferers as much as you can.

Harijan, 13-2-1937

311. SPEECH IN AN ANDHRA VILLAGE[2]

[*January 23, 1937*]

I have been wandering from 6.30 through the cyclone area, but I cannot say that I have seen much. If I really wanted to see the cyclone area, I should not have gone about like a lord in a car but should have walked through it. But I had only a few hours and there is no time left for anything like a study of the situation. The only thing I can do, having come here, is to say a word of comfort. I know that my voice cannot reach the Government. I have no influence with them, nor have I any with those in charge of affairs here. But I can certainly say that though everyone else may forsake you, God never forsakes people in distress. When I studied Tamil many years ago I came across a proverb which I cannot forget. This is it: *Tikkattravannukku Daivametunai*, which means, 'for those who are helpless, God is the help.' But it should not remain merely on our lips, it should enter our hearts, and then no matter how many cyclones we have, we shall rejoice within. That also does not mean that you will be lazy. A man who has faith in God works twenty-four hours, for He has given us hands and feet. And if we use them, He will give us food and clothing too. So you must not expect me to weep with you. My function is to make those who weep forget their sorrow and smile. And I know you know how to smile. But those only can smile well who know how to labour with their hands and feet for others and, especially in a place like this, those can smile who divide their good fortune with others. If the powers that be give us help, we shall receive it gratefully, but if it does not come, we will not commit suicide or swear at them, nor become misanthropes instead of philanthropes. You must therefore be cheerful and help your less fortunate brethren. I am

[1] Very few hands were raised.

[2] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

coming from a place where a gentleman has given away six acres of land for Harijans. Those who are wealthy will, I hope, follow his example.

Harijan, 13-2-1937

312. SPEECH AT GUNTUR[1]

[*January 23, 1937*]

I cannot estimate the actual extent of the damage, but I may say that I have seen many a house utterly destroyed, more houses where the roofs had been blown off, many huts remain utterly uninhabitable even after three months. Mighty trees have been bent from their roots and there were innumerable fields from which crops were swept away. It seems to me that the relief granted by Government and sent to the Committee by the public was wholly inadequate to this emergency. At Vinayashramam, when it was quite dark, hundreds of men and women were eager to see me and when I started my mission of begging, there was not a man or woman that did not pay. Some sisters gave away their jewels. I have no influence with Government. I can only make an appeal to them, if my voice can reach them.

Harijan, 13-2-1937, also *The Hindu*, 25-1-1937

313. SPEECH AT BEZWADA[2]

[*January 23, 1937*]

Mahatmaji, at the outset, referred to the heavy damage done to a portion of the Guntur District by the recent cyclone and regretted that he had no time to narrate his experiences of his tour in that affected area. When Guntur was affected, people in Andhradesha thought that the whole of Andhradesha was afflicted and so there was not sufficient contribution to the Cyclone Relief Fund. Proceeding he said:

I hold it is not true. I commenced collecting subscriptions even at Vinayashramam and other affected areas. In God's dispensation, even in the most affected areas, there are some who

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

[2] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter". Gandhiji spoke in English and the speech was translated into Telugu.

escaped affliction and can contribute to the relief of the distressed. Necessarily people from the unaffected areas also came to see me. As it is usual in Andhradesha they contributed liberally. I have been rushing through space and so I had no time to count the collections. Many ladies gave away their jewels. I can say I have collected roughly Rs. 1,500. If I had more time, I would have collected more money. Because several weeks have passed by, do not think no further relief is necessary. Some of the vast damages are irreparable. There are some humble huts which require adequate and immediate relief. For want of sufficient funds, they are still left in the same state. Some are roofless and some wall-less. If money comes, they will be repaired. I want you to give at this meeting as much as possible. Even afterwards, continue sending liberal contributions to the Cyclone Relief Fund. Let it not be said of the people in Andhradesha that homes were destroyed, crops were swept away, trees were uprooted, men and cattle killed, and yet no person in Andhradesha lifted his finger to organize relief. Because a part has been affected, let no one say that the whole of the province has been affected. It is altogether wrong to expect that Bombay would relieve the distress. People in Bombay will not see the havoc. You can see it within a few miles of you. You must do all in your power before you look to any other province for help.

Harijan, 13-2-1937, also *The Hindu*, 25-1-1937

314. CONUNDRUMS[1]

A friend has addressed me the following conundrums:

(1) If temples are thrown open to the Harijans, there is danger of their next insisting on being admitted to all the parts where the priest is admitted, only because they satisfy the test of personal cleanliness.

(2) Your statement that God does not reside in temples where Harijans are not admitted seems to me to be a one-sided and therefore misleading statement. In my opinion it is as untrue to say that God is not in temples where Harijans are not admitted as that God is to be found only in temples and not outside. It challenged, as it were, the omnipresence of God. He is everywhere, there is no place where He is not

[1] The Gujarati original of this was published in *Harijanbandhu*, 24-1-1937 This translation is by Pyarelal.

(3) Then, you say that Hinduism must perish if untouchability lives. But Hinduism has continued to exist all these years in spite of the institution of untouchability, and there is no reason why it should be otherwise now or in future. Nor should you forget that it is Hinduism with its much-abused institution of untouchability that, on your own admission, has in the past brought you spiritual peace and consolation.

Now, for my reply. A man of faith may not shrink from his present duties or deviate from the right path for fear of possible difficulties in the future. The only thing for us, therefore, is to proceed by implicitly accepting absolute equality between ourselves and the Harijans and to give them the same credit for reasonableness as we claim for ourselves. All past experience goes to show that they do not resent such restrictions as are reasonable and apply equally to the *savarna* Hindus, but they naturally do not and cannot be expected to appreciate and accept ex-cathedra usages that discriminate between *savarnas* and *avarnas* and between the different groups among the *avarnas* themselves, as these smack of invidiousness and offend against reason.

(2) True, the statement that God does not dwell in temples from which Harijans are excluded is one-sided and therefore true in a certain and limited sense only. But does that not apply to human speech itself? But we have not on that account condemned or discarded the use of human speech. With all its imperfections as a vehicle for the expression of truth, we must rely on it for all practical purposes, or it would spell an end of all human intercourse. Tulsidas has made Rama say in his *Ramayana* that God dwells only in the hearts of the good and the pure, not of those who are wicked or evil-minded. Now this statement, again, is only partly true. But still more untrue and mischievous in its pragmatic effect would be its reverse, viz, that God dwells in the hearts of the wicked and evil-minded too and actuates them in their evil deeds, though as a strictly scientific statement of truth it would be perhaps nearer the mark. In a strictly scientific sense God is at the bottom of both good and evil. He directs the assassin's dagger no less than the surgeon's knife. But for all that good and evil are, for human purposes, from each other distinct and incompatible, being symbolical of light and darkness, God and Satan, Ahriman and Ormuzd respectively. My statement, therefore, that where Harijans are excluded there God is not, must stand.

(3) My correspondent's argument here altogether lacks point. The slow disintegration of Hinduism one can see even today taking place under our very nose, mainly and principally in consequence of the curse of untouchability. Anyone who has eyes can see it. A moribund, life-in-death sort of existence should not be mistaken for life; in fact it is more distressing than death itself. If a person like me can today derive spiritual force and consolation from Hinduism, it is because I have never regarded untouchability as an integral part of Hinduism. It may perhaps be objected that the term 'disintegration of Hinduism' which I have used is misleading since disintegration of Hindu society need not necessarily mean the disintegration of Hindu religion. The objection is based on a fallacy and is only partly valid. In mundane sense a faith can have no existence apart from its votaries. It may personally console me even if I can bear witness to my faith as its sole surviving representative; but of what avail would it be to those millions who fell away from it?

Harijan, 20-2-1937

315. HARIJAN ASHRAMS IN KATHIAWAR

My help is expected in raising of funds for these ashrams. I am sorry to say that my plight is as pitiable as that of the man who having once burnt his tongue with milk, blows even on buttermilk before drinking it. This does not mean that no one should help those ashrams. I can no longer request people or write to them as I did in the past. I do not have the courage to do so. But those who have been supporting such ashrams should make inquiries for their own satisfaction and continue to help them if they are satisfied. It has never happened with regard to any institution in the world that all the workers have turned out good. This should not stop all the public activities. If some workers have proved to be false coin, there are others who have been carrying on their work in keeping with moral principles and have brought credit to their institutions. The work of Harijan welfare will go on and it should go on. All that is necessary is that the organizers who have so far depended on me should give up all hopes of me. I am alive today, but may not be tomorrow. How long can one trust one's physical frame? Hence the organizers should consider my pitiable condition and, relying on themselves, bring credit to the institutions to which they

belong. Those who are engaged in Harijan welfare activities or any other service should never give up faith or their work.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 24-1-1937

316. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

[*January 24*][1], *1937*

DEAR DAUGHTER AMTUL SALAAM,

We reached here today. Kanti went to Poona taking Saraswati with him. He will come to Bombay with her. Paparamma had been to Bangalore but could not come here.

Sharma has met you. If you wish to come and see Saraswati you may.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 597

317. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 25, 1937

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

You did not write to me probably because I was touring. We returned yesterday. Write and tell me how you are. Come if you wish. Don't feel hesitant. I got a letter from Madam Wadia. She has acknowledged the letter. Prabha is with me. Saraswati is fine.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N 373

[1] The date is illegible in the source. However, Gandhiji arrived in Segaon on January 24, from where the letter is obviously written.

318. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

January 25, 1937

CHI. LILI,

I have had no letters from you recently. We returned from the tour yesterday. I had a letter from Nanavati from which I learnt that your brother could not be said to have improved yet. You will have got my last letter. I hope you are following the suggestions I made in it.

Tell Nanavati if he is there that I didn't reply to him since he told me he would be reaching there about the 25th. Have you taken your little pair of scissors with you or left it here?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9354. Also C.W. 6629. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

319. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 25, 1937

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I had been hesitating to go to Travancore but it was good I did. God knows what the others got but I for one got more than money. You will find an account in *Harijan*. Double it and you will have an idea of what I mean.

I saw the Maharaja and the Maharani. The interview was good. We talked fully and frankly. Such unprecedented awakening among Harijans, and of such a nature, would not have been possible in any other way.

My belief is getting stronger that the branches can get from the centre not funds but moral support and prestige. If they are not satisfied with this they may well close down or work independently. In that eventuality we may do what we can through the agency. Those branches should be regarded useless that cannot collect funds to meet their expenditure. I feel no

necessity for waiting for a year in this respect. Whatever changes in Harijan Nivas are contemplated need not be put off for a year. Why not reduce the unnecessary expenses from now? But of course Thakkar Bapa's assent is required and Malkani too must be consulted.

I am trying to draw Dinkar and have already sent a letter to him.

The correspondence with Parameshwari is still continuing. I am awaiting one more letter from him and shall write to you further when I receive it. I have now agreed that he may be authorized to form a new institution and that he may do what he wants so long as our work goes on. The condition solely is that he should be able to carry on with the funds available and without seeking loans.

It will be good if you can come over for a few days when you can find some time.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original. C W. 8028. Courtesy G. D Birla

320. *LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 26, 1937

CHI. KANTI,

I got your letter. It does not become you to say that you should like to go Rasik's way. If you believe that you are taking due care of your health, I would have nothing to say.

I thought you were joking when you said that you wished to fly to Paparamma. On the subject being mentioned casually, Prabhavati told me that you really wanted to fly to Trivandrum. If this is true, then it is something I don't like. The aeroplane is not for the poor or for a man who is patient. You probably know that I don't like even cars, though I do use them when I can't help it. This may be described as a weakness of mine. Moreover, where is the plane fare to come from? If any friend offers to pay it, I wouldn't like you to accept it, nor even if Paparamma sends it. I can't stand your becoming a beggar. But this is my philosophy. You need not ask for my permission to fly in a plane. You are free and I should like you to act freely. It would be a different thing if you deferred to my views

voluntarily and with faith. Your freedom will not be compromised thereby. But I shouldn't like it if you did something to please me or out of fear of me. That will not be for your good. I would rather that you acted upon only those ideas of mine which you can readily accept. How can you help it if you can't like my ideas? If I were to find fault with you for that, I myself would be guilty of a wrong. You may, therefore, do as you please as regards flying to Trivandrum.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. C.W. 7313. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

321. TELEGRAM TO VITHALDAS KOTHARI

WARDHAGANJ,
January 27, 1937

VITHALDAS KOTHARI
GUJARAT VIDYAPITH, AHMEDABAD

SEND PURATAN[1] IMMEDIATELY.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 7699

322. LETTER TO H. S. L. POLAK[2]

January 27, 1937

MY DEAR HENRY,

Owing to the pilgrimage to Travancore, it has not been possible for me to write to you earlier. Your question is whether I retain the same opinion as I did at the R. T. C. of 1931. I said then and repeat now that so far as I am concerned, if Dominion Status were offered in terms of the Statute of Westminster, i.e., the right to secede at will, I would unhesitatingly accept it.

Yours sincerely,
BHAI

The Hindu, 1-2-1937

[1] Puratan Buch, a khadi worker

[2] In the course of a talk at Segaon in early January Polak had asked Gandhiji what he meant by "complete independence". He then requested Gandhiji to give it in writing

323. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 27, 1937

BHAI MUNSHI,

My right hand is disabled and it would take more time to write with the left. Today I can't spare that much time.

I didn't write anything to Rajaji. The newspapers are nowadays cultivating very efficiently the art of telling lies. When Mahadev and I first read the news about Rajaji contesting the election, we just laughed at it. I was taken aback by the news about my consent Rajaji did explain to me in Madras why he had come to that decision. I am not ready to believe that his candidature is necessarily for the good. Since I have respect for his decisions, I do hope that this decision of his will benefit the country. But my mind is not ready at present to go further than this.

I will welcome it if you can spare me in regard to the late Narasinhrao. I have already conveyed to his family members my homage to his sacred memory. I had great respect for him and it was increasing day by day. I admired his faith in God. He had made a very pleasing translation of "Lead ·Kindly Light" at my request. It was the cause of the personal bond between us.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati. C W 7611. Courtesy K M Munshi

324. LETTER TO C. A. AIYAMUTHU

January 28, 1937

DEAR AIYAMUTHU,

Shankerlal Banker has sent me a copy of your letter which I consider hysterical. I had given you some credit for possessing a sense of humour but I see I was thoroughly mistaken Chelaswami must have been particularly dense seeing that he could not appreciate the very delicate compliment which I really paid you when he told me that he was not Aiyamuthu. The compliment

was this. You did not consider it necessary to rush up to Faizpur[1] and abandon your post of duty in Tirupur. All the while I was talking to Chelaswami I was smiling and cracking jokes. So I said, as far as I can recollect, something like this. 'Why should Aiyamuthu come here? He sends you here and himself loafs about in Tirupur.' Chelaswami's denseness I can excuse but I cannot excuse yours. Surely you should have at once said to Chelaswami: 'You do not understand what Bapu meant. He liked my restraint in not going to Faizpur.' Now tell me if you understand this letter and whether it helps you out of your agony? And do you now understand what the poets all over the world have said, viz , that a man is the maker of his own happiness and misery.

Yours,
BAPU

SJT. C. A. AIYAMUTHU
A. I. S. A. KHADI DEPOT
TIRUPUR, S. INDIA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy Pyarelal

325. LETTER TO KALIDAS NAG

January 29, 1937

DEAR KALIDAS NAG,

I have your letter written on the boat taking you to Honolulu. I have no inspiring message to give to anybody, if non-violence is not its own message. But I can state my own experience of nearly fifty years of practice that there is no force known to mankind which is equal to non-violence. It cannot, however, be learnt through books. It has got to be lived.

You ask me to mention books For the reason just stated it is difficult to single out books purely dedicated to an exposition of non-violence. Richard Gregg's *Power of Non-violence* may be studied with advantage. Tolstoy's later writings are also aids to a contemplation of non-violence.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. KALIDAS NAG
C/O THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
HONOLULU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers Courtesy Pyarelal

[1] For the Congress session, from December 22 to 29, 1936

326. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 29, 1937

CHI. KANTI,

What have you been doing? Have you asked Trivediji for Rs. 100? Devdas is deeply pained. Is it right for you to ask for money in this manner without his permission? What was your promise to me? What has happened to it? What do you want Rs. 100 for? Won't you open your heart to me? I feel much worried about you. Won't you free me from my worry and fear? Please reply immediately and write to Devdas also.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7314. Courtesy Kantilal Gandhi

327. A CHRISTIAN LETTER

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was with me during the Travancore pilgrimage. Though she could not enter the temples, she followed the pilgrimage in all other respects. She has felt moved by what she observed during the pilgrimage, and has placed in my hands the following letter[1] which I dare not withhold from the reader:

> . . I am of opinion that the missionary with the best intention in the world—for we must credit him with honesty of purpose—has wronged Indian Christians in more ways than one. Many converts here have been denationalized, e.g , even their names have been changed in many instances to those of Europeans, they have been told that there is no true light to be found in the religion of their forefathers. The ancient scriptures of their ancestors are a closed book to them. . . . At the same time, while there has been no conscious effort to purge the Indian Church of the taint of untouchability that exists within its own doors, the untouchability that exists in Hinduism has been exploited to the extent of so-called Christianity of the Depressed Classes. I say 'so-called Christianity' advisedly, because I know that not one of

[1] Only extracts have been reproduced here.

> these poor people to whom I have spoken—and I have spoken to many—has been able to tell me anything of the spiritual implications of his change of faith. That he is equally ignorant of the faith of his forefathers and has been sadly neglected by his own community does not seem to me to be ample or any reason for transplanting him to an alien soil where he can find no root.
>
> Your utterances during your pilgrimage of penitence in Travancore have been a great joy. In particular do I rejoice in your special message to the Christian community at Kottayam.[1] In admitting once again the equality of all religions you have given Christians much food for thought, and I hope and pray that this will be the beginning of an era of self-purification for them no less than for the members of the Hindu fold. Are we not all Hindus inasmuch as we are the children of Hind? Is there not room for Jesus in Hinduism? There must be. I cannot believe that any who seek to worship God in spirit and in truth are outside the pale of any of the great religions which draw their inspiration from Him who is the fountain-head of all Truth. I am sure I am not the only Indian born in the Christian faith who holds these views, but I feel that if the teaching and example of Jesus are to enrich the life of our country, Indian Christians must turn the searchlight inwards and seek to serve in that spirit of humility and tolerance which is the essence of all true religion and without which there can be no unity and no peace and goodwill on earth.
>
> Will you not help the Indian Christian to realize his mission? You can, because you have drawn inspiration from Jesus' undying teachings as embodied in the Sermon on the Mount. We assuredly stand in need of guidance.

Owing to her close contact with me there was hesitation on my part over the publication. But the knowledge that she has very imperfectly voiced what other Christian friends have told me has overcome my hesitation. But I do not feel competent to guide Indian Christians. I can, however, appeal to them as I did at Kottayam and as I have done before then through these columns. I am on safer ground in responding to the Rajkumari's belief that there is in Hinduism room enough for Jesus, as there is for Mahomed, Zoroaster and Moses. For me the different religions are beautiful flowers from the same garden, or they are branches of the same majestic tree. Therefore they are equally true, though being received and interpreted through human instruments equally imperfect. It is impossible for me to reconcile

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Public Meeting, Kottayam", pp. 287-91.

myself to the idea of conversion after the style that goes on in India and elsewhere today. It is an error which is perhaps the greatest impediment to the world's progress towards peace. 'Warring creeds' is a blasphemous expression. And it fitly describes the state of things in India, the mother as I believe her to be of religion or religions. If she is truly the mother, the motherhood is on trial. Why should a Christian want to convert a Hindu to Christianity and vice versa? Why should he not be satisfied if the Hindu is a good or godly man? If the morals of a man are a matter of no concern, the form of worship in a particular manner in a church, a mosque or a temple is an empty formula, it may even be a hindrance to individual or social growth, and insistence on a particular form or repetition of a credo may be a potent cause of violent quarrels leading to bloodshed and ending in utter disbelief in religion, i.e., God Himself

Harijan, 30-1-1937

328. WANT OF THOROUGHNESS

There is in Travancore an association called The All-Kerala Young Folks' League. Its ambitious motto is 'We serve'. They have also a 'League of Pity' as a branch activity For want of time, during the nine days' rush in Travancore, for a personal discussion, the members sent me a letter from which I cull the following:

> Boys and girls are encouraged to learn some handicrafts by which they can earn some money We are quite glad to tell you that many of our boys have taken to spinning as one of their hobbies As beginners in this field, we have also several problems to be solved and difficulties to be encompassed The one thing that is troubling us much regarding the spinning of yarn is its disposal We submit that the yarn produced by our boys and girls is of a low type and cannot find a good market. But the difficulty even for the good type of yarn is that we cannot sell even that to our advantage And hence many of our members have begun to drop the hobby We shall be grateful if you please tell us of some method to dispose of it A portion of the money thus earned by the members is given to the poor.
>
> On every Onam day all our members, regardless of caste or creed, collect together to celebrate our Goodwill Day On that day, they burn in public a devil's form made of straw to represent untouchability, the day's programme closing with a common dinner.

The League has a very ambitious programme and a high-sounding motto. It seems to me that they will neither serve themselves nor society unless they are thorough in whatever they take up. In trying to be thorough they may have to cut out some or even many activities. If such be the case, they should not hesitate to do so. They seek my advice on spinning as they rightly think I, as the author of the movement, should be able to guide them. They call it one of their hobbies. But even hobbies need to be thoroughly cultivated if they are to yield the greatest amount of enjoyment. They are mistaken in thinking that good yarn has no market If they produce strong and even yarn of 8 counts, it will have a market in Nagercoil. I suggest a better use, however, of their yarn. They should add weaving to their hobby of spinning. If they will do so, the coarse yarn which the beginners will turn out can be woven into tape, *nevar*, *asana*, carpets, etc., and the fine into dhotis for men and women. They need not seek a market for such wares. For they will hardly produce enough for their own personal use. If they will specialize in this one hobby, they will sufficiently live up to their motto of service and many young men will most certainly earn a living if they become whole-time workers. The League has 7,000 members. They make a nucleus of a true co-operative society They can run a store or stores which will sell articles manufactured by the members, and they will be mainly only such articles as the members themselves will require. Khadi can assuredly come first in any such co-operative activity. And Travancore or rather the whole of Kerala is a place where khadi can easily become universal, for the Kerala people, both men and women, have the simplest dress of all India and it is all white. Even the border is a late innovation. But let the League members remember that spinning includes all the anterior processes beginning with picking of cotton, disengaging it from pods, cleaning, ginning and carding it and turning it into slivers. If they are all well done, they are fascinating occupations giving exercise both to the body and the mind. If they will turn to spinning in the spirit of scientists, let them read the article 'What Is Khadi Science?'[1] in *Harijan* of the 16th inst.

Harijan, 30-1-1937

[1] *Vide* pp. 248-51.

329. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 30, 1937

CHI. SUSHILA,

You have been shouldering heavy responsibility. May God help you. But God will help you only if you help yourself. If your health is not good nor Sita's, how long can you keep yourself up? If your health improves you can take up a lot of work. But you do not observe self-control. How did you have the miscarriage? You two are not children. One's life should become reflective. One should acquire control over the senses. Why should the senses drag us? Is there anything more shameful than that? If you exercise control over your food and your personal habits, then your body will become healthy and both of you will be happy. And you will be able to handle a lot of Manilal's work.

Instead of making Sita a doll, you should start giving her training in domestic chores right from now. If your own life is methodical, she will automatically learn a great deal. Sita and you should take both types of Kuhne baths. You must take to walking for exercise. In diet, you should take fruit and things made from whole wheat flour, drink fresh milk and eat green vegetables in moderate quantities. If you get fresh milk, there is not much need for ghee. You can make such changes in this as experience may suggest.

Do not feel unhappy about Shanti. Be content with whatever service anyone renders. If we do not fail in our duty we shall be able to overcome all obstacles.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I won't write a separate letter to Manilal now. I wanted to write one but I have no time.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4860

330. NEED FOR TOLERANCE[1]

A Mussalman friend had addressed me a long letter of which the following is the gist.[2]

> (1) I turned a vegetarian several years ago, being struck by the iniquitous cruelty of slaughtering God's dumb creatures to provide meat for our tables Ever since then I have completely abjured the taking of meat though meat-eating is allowed by Islam. But I have not been able to induce my children to abjure meat-eating likewise, with the result that I have still to procure meat for them from the bazaar. Sometimes, however, I am troubled by a doubt whether this is not all wrong Would I remain a silent witness, if my children took to theft and murder, for instance?
>
> (2) What I have said with regard to meat also holds good in respect of tea, betel leaf, soda water, lemonade, etc.
>
> (3) I belong to the trader class and hence am quite conversant with the various shadowy tricks and devices that are in vogue among this class, e g , how to exploit the inexperience and weakness of the buyer in order to palm off upon him goods that are utterly worthless, charging prices not according to the cost or to any fixed principle but according to what an unwary customer can be made to fork out and so on For years I have felt an innate repugnance against all this which Mrs. Besant once described as "white loot". But I feel utterly helpless . . .
>
> (4) You regard Mahomed as a Prophet of God and hold him in high regard You have even publicly spoken of him in the highest terms I have heard and even seen reports in cold print to the effect that you have studied the Koran itself All this, I must confess, has puzzled me I am at a loss to understand how a person like you, with all your passion for truth and justice, who has never failed to gloss over [*sic*] a single fault in Hinduism or to repudiate as unauthentic the numerous corruptions that masquerade under it, can holus-bolus accept all that is in the Koran. I am not aware of your ever having called into question or denounced any iniquitous injunction of Islam. Against some of these I learnt to revolt when I was scarcely 18 or 20 years old and time has since only strengthened that first feeling

[1] The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 31-1-1937 The translation is by Pyarelal

[2] Only extracts have been reproduced here

I have tried as far as was possible to retain the language of the original, taking liberty only to soften a few expressions here and there, but have otherwise scrupulously kept the sense intact. To come to the various points mentioned by my correspondent. He deserves to be congratulated on his giving up meat-eating and on the various other disciplines that he has cultivated. But he may not impose the same on his unwilling or half-willing relations or dependents. Let him try to touch their hearts and reason by all the means of persuasion at his command; but anything more than that before the desired conversion has come about would be compulsion and therefore unjustifiable. It would obviously be too much for him to expect the members of his family all of a sudden to break with a life-long habit that has never been regarded as contrary to Islam, which is almost universal among the Mussalmans today and till yesterday was followed by the friend in question himself. Let him not forget the long years of strenuous introspection and struggle which he took before he arrived at his decision. To require now his dependents to adopt that decision at a stroke would only betray impatience on his part. The golden rule to be observed always in this connection is that you can never be too severe in dealing with yourself but you must be deliberately liberal in judging others. For, experience has shown that no matter how severe we may try to be with regard to ourselves, we shall, in the result, still be found to have acted partially towards ourselves, for the simple reason that our unconscious bias always prepossesses us in our favour and seldom allows the test to be carried beyond our capacity for endurance. But in the case of others we do not know their weaknesses and limitations, which are known only to God who alone can read our hearts. There is therefore always a danger, with all our desire to be liberal, of our being betrayed into a hollow harshness and intolerance when we proceed to apply our personal standards to others; and paradoxical though it may sound, the more liberal, the more patient, the more considerate we are in such cases, the quicker the results are likely to be; they will certainly be more permanent and lasting.

The analogy between meat-eating and theft or murder drawn by the correspondent in question is altogether untenable. Theft and murder, unlike meat-eating, are universally held to be crimes and are heavily punishable under the law. But even so one may not, in the hypothetical case cited above, try to wean dependents and relations from their career of theft and murder through compulsion. My correspondent must, therefore, try to convert

members of his household to his view by patient argument alone, tempered by love, and pending their conversion, cultivate an attitude of the broadest tolerance and forbearance towards them.

To proceed to the next question. I do not hold dishonest practices in business to be warranted or excusable. The principle of unconditional honesty is as binding in this as in any other field of life, and it is up to a business man never to compromise his principle no matter what it may cost him. In the end, of course, honesty pays, though that can hardly be a consideration for observing it. One has a perfect right to fix and regulate the scale of prices that he shall charge from a particular set of customers, but it must be done according to a clear fixed principle and not out of mere opportunism or immoral expediency. There should be in it no room for fraud, sharp practice or finesse, to bamboozle the simple, unsuspecting customer.

Now for Islam. I stand by every word that I have written in that connection. I have nowhere said that I believe literally in every word of the Koran, or for the matter of that of any scripture in the world. But it is no business of mine to criticize the scriptures of other faiths or to point out their defects. It is and should be, however, my privilege to proclaim and practise the truths that there may be in them. I may not, therefore, criticize, or condemn things in the Koran or the life of the Prophet that I cannot understand. But I welcome every opportunity to express my admiration for such aspects of his life as I have been able to appreciate and understand. As for things that present difficulties, I am content to see them through the eyes of devout Mussalman friends, while I try to understand them with the help of the writings of eminent Muslim expounders of Islam. It is only through such a reverential approach to faiths other than mine that I can realize the principle of equality of all religions. But it is both my right and duty to point out the defects in Hinduism in order to purify it and to keep it pure. But when non-Hindu critics set about criticizing Hinduism and cataloguing its faults they only blazon their own ignorance of Hinduism and their incapacity to regard it from the Hindu viewpoint. It distorts their vision and vitiates their judgment. Thus my own experience of the non-Hindu critics of Hinduism brings home to me my limitations and teaches me to be wary of launching on a criticism of Islam or Christianity and their founders.

Harijan, 13-3-1937

331. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

January 31, 1937

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I cannot write with the right hand. I will therefore write only a few lines. How could I get the time to write during the journey?

Why do you send your letters by express delivery?

It was such a long letter and yet there was no substance to it. When will you learn to write letters?

The trip to Belgaum will probably be fixed in the middle of April. Let it be when it will. I should advise you to come over here and tell me whatever you wish to. If you have nothing to do for your brothers there, do come.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 388

332. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

SEGAON, WARDHA,
January 31, 1937

CHI. NARAHARI,

I got your letter. I will discuss Vinoba's opinion with him. I have not been able to understand it.

The Goseva Sangh can take over the Goshala of Dhulia without assuming financial responsibility for it. But the present trustees of Dhulia would not like it.

When are you leaving for the Kathiawar tour?

I think the opinion that you have expressed to Rameshwar regarding ghee is perfectly correct.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9104

333. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

SEGAON,
February 1, 1937

CHI KANTI,

I got your letter. Take Rs. 15 from Ramdas. Prabhavati will stay on for this month at any rate. You may come.

I am very much afraid of you. You are very touchy. Even Paparamma is afraid of you, to say nothing of Saraswati Ramachandran is the only one who is not afraid of you. But you do not spare him either I absolutely did not understand the meaning of your letters. You may read any meaning in my letters that you like.

I do not at all like the transaction with Kunvarjibhai. Please bear in mind that we always go down in the eyes of those from whom we borrow money. But there is no question of going down in the eyes of one's parents. We may, therefore, take from them whatever they can give and be satisfied. But my yardstick seems to you too big. Does it not? Big or small, know that that is the only right yardstick for human beings. It is not a yardstick for gods. Instead of dismissing me as a superhuman being, if you coolly weigh what I am writing in the scales of your reason, it will assuredly do you good. When you read and remember it for examination, it is called memory. Perhaps it can be cultivated. But reason can only be developed by discriminating between good and bad.

Prabhavati is sleeping. But why need I detain the letter? I am, therefore, sending it for being posted. I myself have sealed it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati C W 7315 Courtesy Kantilal Gandhi

334. LETTER TO GOKULBHAI

February 1, 1937

BHAI GOKULBHAI,

I have your letter about Surajbehn and also the note about Faizpur.

I have much to say about the kitchen. I believe that the work will become very easy if it is entrusted to persons who have the experience of running large messes. They too form a part of the nation. It is our duty to encourage them and train them. They have many shortcomings. Their talent should on no account be ignored. I think it is easy to supervise a hundred catering experts and get work from them than to train a thousand volunteers for the kitchen. And that is good for the nation as a whole.

It is true that caterers should be highly efficient. I shall be happy if they can serve food to five thousand persons at a time and manage it efficiently. I do not think it is an impossible task. We do arrange feasts for nine communities. Even then it requires training to manage it efficiently. The work becomes easy when there is a division of labour. Sikhs' *langars* are also worth giving thought to. You seem to aspire to become the kitchen expert. There is nothing wrong in that Wasn't cooking one of the many accomplishments of Nala? So you may become an expert.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati. Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

335. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

February 2, 1937

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

I got your letter. Chitre's goodness is beyond doubt. But his goodness is now eating him away. His sacrifice has become purely egoistic. There should be detachment and knowledge even behind sacrifice. One sees neither in Chitre at present. I have tried very hard to bring him round but have failed completely. Perhaps

the best service to him may be not to interfere with him in anything he does but give him whatever help he may ask for. Perhaps he will learn from experience. Through egoistic fasts, etc., he has made his mind blank and his body weak. He has, therefore, remained fit for nothing. If he takes to socialism and can remain cheerful, even then it will be all right. I am writing a letter to him and sending it with this. Give it to him. Please do not worry as you have been doing. God is there to look after all. He makes some people foolish and some wise. His ways are inscrutable. Our dharma is simple. We should do the duty that has come to us unsought and not worry about the result. We need not carry the burden of the world's woes on our heads nor lose our balance of mind at the sight of its pomp. We should not give pain to anybody nor harbour ill will towards anybody. We should not grab anybody's property and should keep our hands clean If we live thus, we have done our duty We can then say like king Janaka. "What does it matter if the city is in flames?"

Blessings from

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 392 Courtesy Bhagwanji P Pàndya

336. LETTER TO BRIJMOHAN

February 2, 1937

BHAI BRIJMOHAN,

I had answered by wire your letter and wire. Since I have a little time I write you a few words.

Do go abroad but don't be too eager. Do earn money but not for yourself, only for the poor. People generally give for the poor from whatever is left after spending on their luxuries. Justice lies in earning money for the poor first and then for ourselves. Those who have the talent for earning money should certainly make use of it. But the entire earning should be spent in the service of the people. I know all your brothers have such an inclination. May it grow still more—that is my desire and my blessing. May God bless you.

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy. Pyarelal

337. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

SEGAON,
February 3, 1937

CHI. KANTI,

What would be everybody's fate if you were to get a third eye! At present only a few like me get burnt by the fire of your two eyes. What would happen if you were to get a third?

It was good that I sealed the letter[1] about the Rs. 15 while Prabha was asleep. If I hadn't done that you would definitely have thought that I had sent you Rs. 15 as fine. But why should you demand a fine? It was another Kantilal Gandhi that Trivedi saw. Thus everybody got a reason to smile after a time of sorrow. But what is the difference between Kunvarji and Trivedi?[2] If Devdas were to know about Kunvarji, how would he feel? I haven't written to him. If, however, I have been able to convince you rationally you should not borrow a single pie from anybody without Devdas's permission. Nor should you spend more than necessary. I have no doubt that this will be for your good. You have only two persons from whom to ask for anything, and they are Devdas and myself.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W 7316. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

338. LETTER TO KHUSHALCHAND GANDHI

February 3, 1937

RESPECTED BROTHER,

I am sure you could not be grieving over the death of my sister-in-law. Only one who has earned great merit meets such a death. I only felt happy when I got the telegram.

Salutations of
MOHANDAS

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M M U /II

[1] *Vide* p. 334

[2] *Vide* "Letter to Kantilal Gandhi", p. 325.

339. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

February 3, 1937

CHI. NARANDAS,

Your description is excellent. That day of death[1] was indeed a day of celebration. Here also Krishna[2] and Kanaiyo[3] behaved very well.

I hope the school is going on all right.

How is Purushottam[4]? How is Vijaya[5]?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M U /II. Also C W. 8514 Courtesy Narandas Gandhi

340. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

February 3, 1937

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

You have been well saved. If self-control does not come easily to you, you may marry. You must practise restraint over food.

It is very necessary to make slivers with your own hands. You should do it.

What can you gain by further studies? You can readily obtain a teaching job provided you do not require a high salary. Will you be satisfied with Rs.75 a month?

You must now compose yourself.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi. G.N 4278, also S.G. 55

[1] Of the addressee's mother; *vide* the preceding item.

[2] Krishnadas Gandhi, son of Chhaganlal Gandhi

[3]&[4] Addressee's sons

[5] Purushottam Gandhi's wife

341. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

SEGAON,
February 4, 1937

CHI. LILA,

It is surprising that you did not receive the letter that I wrote to you from here. I have definitely written one. I looked into my diary also. I wrote the letter on the 25th, i.e., on the next day after my arrival in Segaon. Please inquire now. After reading this letter Mahadev also will inquire at Maganwadi.

Do stay on as long as necessary. When you come I will treat you as a newcomer. All that I want you to do is that while you are there you should strictly follow the rules of this place. Take every step after careful thinking. The prayer must not be missed, nor should spinning be omitted. Only indigenous paper should be used. I am glad that Dr. Yodh holds out the fullest hope and is confident. If he recovers, Damayanti will be free from worry. If you fix a particular day of the week for writing to me, you will be able to write regularly. It would be an excellent thing to fix a definite time for every activity and the practice saves time and the strain of thinking. My right hand needs rest. On Monday, it has to be used for *Harijan* work. I write a little with my left hand but it consumes more time. I, therefore, dictate Gujarati and English letters whenever I can get hold of somebody.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9355 Also C.W. 6630. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

342. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

February 4, 1937

CHI. SUSHILA, MANILAL,

How is it that you suffer miscarriages so often? Both of you should think over this. This is a matter in which no one

else's wisdom can help you. Those who lead a thoughtful life and are filled with devotion to God, always succeed in finding the right path for themselves. I only wish that you should not become an invalid.

You did not have much hope for Shanti from the very beginning. You got his services so long as he owed you a debt from his previous life.

You will have to wind up everything there if you do not succeed in finding anyone to take up your work. Isn't that so?

I hope Sita is better now. Accustom her to hip-baths and friction-baths. Haven't I already written to you about her food? Milk, whole-wheat flour in very small quantities, green vegetables like gourd, bitter gourd, amaranth, lettuce, etc. I see that it is better to eat onions and garlic uncooked. Starchy foods like potatoes, etc., should be eaten sparingly or excluded altogether. Among fruits, pineapple, oranges, *mosambis*, grapes and similar juicy fruits.

I remembered both of you in Faizpur. The Congress session in a village was a great success. Manu is with me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N. 4861

343. *LETTER TO PRABHASHANKAR MEHTA*

February 4, 1937

BHAI PRABHASHANKAR,

As I was touring Travancore, I have been much in arrears with my correspondence. Moreover, my hand needs rest nowadays and so I cannot write readily. Nor am I able to dictate letters whenever I wish to. It seems that you are not taking necessary treatment for your health. A disease should be put down the moment its symptoms appear. What can I do regarding the suggestions you have made? Where is the need to advise the teeth to be considerate to the tongue? Champa is your daughter. Ratilal is your son-in-law and so he also is like a son to you. Moreover, Ratilal is a cripple, so to say. He is, therefore, in no position to oppose you in whatever you do. I regard it as your goodness that you consult me. But Nanalal is near you, and you have been consulting him. That is enough.

I understand about Balwant. One cannot expect much improvement in his mother's health at this age. However, I see in many instances that old age can be made bearable by following nature-cure remedies and making necessary changes in diet. A diet like a child's suits best in old age.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8767

344. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

February 4, 1937

CHI. NARAHARI,

I had asked Vinoba about Rameshwardas's letter.[1] He has replied that it is a clear mistake on Rameshwardas's part. He will write to the latter.

How is Titus working? He has asked for a certificate from me. He wants a job somewhere. Of course he says that his dairy is doing very well but that he doesn't get any experience about cattle. I have asked him of what use a certificate from me in a technical matter can be.

How many girls are there? What does the expenditure on education, food, etc., come to?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati S N 9105

345. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

Unrevised

SEGAON,
February 5, 1937

CHI. PREMA,

My right hand needs rest and it takes time to write with the left hand. How can I spare that much time? The burden of work has increased considerably and so I dictate most of the things I have to write. On Mondays I make full use of my right hand.

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Narahari D. Parikh", p. 333

The amanuenses are Vijaya and Manu, and also sometimes Prabhavati. Probably you do not know Vijaya. She is a Patel woman and hails from Bardoli. She has, so to say, forced herself on us, for we had made a firm rule not to make any fresh admission. Vijaya prevailed upon us to break that rule. She put her case in such a manner that I could not send her away. So far I have not regretted admitting her. She goes on doing her work silently and makes up for Lilavati's absence.

Shankarrao must be all right now. I have asked Haribhau Phatak to give me news about his health. But I think you will be able to give detailed news.

I had told Patwardhan that he could come whenever he wished. But, then, don't the hills seem beautiful only from a distance, as they say?

You seem to be going through a fairly severe test. It is at once easy and difficult to put more money in villagers' pockets. If they follow our advice, we can, without any capital or with a minimum of it, double the earnings of all villages. I am not including in this the money earned from villages by those who exploit the villagers. If, however, they do not follow our advice, that is, refuse to do the work suggested by us or to learn the crafts we try to teach them, it is not only difficult but impossible to increase their earnings. Another big difficulty is this. Only a handful of workers are willing to go to villages, and they, too, are inexperienced. Their bodies are not accustomed to the hardships of village life They don't know the villagers' nature and are ignorant of their needs. They cannot use their hands or their intelligence. The knowledge acquired by them in schools and colleges is of little use to them. In these circumstances we have to be patient. We should have faith in ourselves. If the villagers possess sound health, even without Government help we can improve the economic condition of villages considerably, say, to the extent of 50 per cent. I mention 50 per cent as the minimum. My belief is that we can improve it to the extent of 90 per cent. Improvement in physical health, social reform and moral uplift, these are the three main things. They require no Government help at all.

If we get a little Government help only in economic improvement, our task would be very much easier. But in the absence of progress in respect of the foregoing three things, Government help will be of little use. If, therefore, you become a real expert in the science of khadi and refuse to leave the village

despite all temptations, you will realize from first-hand experience the truth of all that I have said above.

You are not doing right in not insisting on cow's milk. Whenever you go out, you can carry with you ghee and *pendas* made from cow's milk. The *pendas* should be without sugar, i.e., made from *mava* only. If you wish, you may eat jaggery with it. This keeps down the expense and fully meets one's requirement of milk. Instead of eating dry *pendas* you can turn them into powder and mix them in warm water to make milk. Such milk lacks only vitamins, but absence of vitamins from the diet for a few days does no harm.

Narmada is Narmada Rana. This whole episode is a pitiable one. It is perfectly easy to understand that everybody cannot observe life-long *brahmacharya*. Those who cannot curb their physical senses may by all means marry. But I cannot tolerate secret indulgence. Man falls through such secret indulgence for no restraints are observed then. I have no prejudice at all against *grihasthashrama*. It is a necessary state, and a beautiful one. But, being an ashrama, it has dharma at its heart. *Grihastha-dharma* is a fine thing, but self-indulgence is reprehensible. My opposition is solely to self-indulgence.

Jamnalal's question to you was perfectly right. He wanted to know your point of view as a woman. Whatever Vinoba, I or others may say, it is very necessary to know what a mature and pure woman feels. And ultimately the real contribution has to be made by the woman. The burden of demonstrating the importance and necessity of *brahmacharya* should not be on man alone. Till now it has been mostly shouldered by him, and in consequence it has become his right. This has earned a bad name for *brahmacharya*. What is more, though it should have been easy to observe, it has proved so difficult that most people find it impossible to observe. In this, too, I blame mostly man. He has done his best to keep woman his inferior. Flattery and brute force have played an equal part in this. Be that as it may, one half of man's body became and has remained weak. The result has been that man has failed in most of his endeavours, as he deserved to do. There is some awakening among women now. But at present it is assuming a perverted form. Man has been indulging her whims and feeding her ego under the pretext of respecting her freedom and woman has taken freedom to mean self-indulgence. Let those

men and women who can save themselves from this do so. Save yourself.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10388. Also C.W. 6827. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

346. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

February 5, 1937

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

My right hand needs rest. I must keep it fit for Monday. I, therefore, give it rest on the other days.

You are ruthlessly tyrannizing over your body. But who can call a Sardar to account or restrain him? If you impair your health, you will have to hear quite a few things from me. So much by way of a preface.

Chandrashanker[1] writes to Mahadev and says that you didn't like my letter[2] to Polak. I had no option but to give him a letter. I had to give a reply. If he wanted a letter, I couldn't but give it. I didn't know that he would immediately publish it. But no harm has been done by its publication. Even if some harm results, it can only be temporary, for the publication of what is true can never do any real harm.

Chandrashanker's letter also mentions the conversation with . . .[3] The report was certainly reprehensible. But I am not responsible for it. He did exactly the opposite of what I had told him. I had plainly declined to express any opinion and had advised him to complain to you. I also explained to him that I had no right to intervene in the matter. In the end I dictated a general principle. He has done no harm in publishing that, of course. What are we to do when somebody thus publishes a false report? As soon as I saw the report, I wrote a strong letter of protest to him But the man is shameless. He has not even acknowledged the letter.

Do you wish that I should issue a contradiction? If I do so, he will be ruined. If you want, you may tell anybody that I had categorically refused to intervene.

[1] Chandrashanker Shukla
[2] *Vide* p. 322
[3] The name is omitted in the source

When are you coming this way?

Where do you wish the Congress to be held? The preparations must start from now on.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 198-9

347. WHAT IS NON-VIOLENCE?

MY DEAR MAHATMAJI,

As you were fully engaged with the Congress affairs these past few weeks, I did not before now acknowledge your postcard which you kindly wrote in reply to my query about 'non-violence in word' nor thanked you for your courtesy in discussing at length the point at issue in the *Harijan* of December 19th[1] I have carefully read and weighed your argument, but I cannot help believing that you were not non-violent in the words you used with reference to the missionaries in general who have been working, and working so nobly, for the good of our motherland for the past hundred years.

You say· 'The essence of violence is that there must be a violent intention behind a thought, word or act, i e., an intention to do harm to the opponent so called.' I don't think you are right here Take for instance, a father smacking the face of his unruly and intractable child for some offence or other No one could for a moment believe that there was 'a violent intention behind' that act of the father or that he had 'an intention to do harm' to his own child Nevertheless that smacking of the child was an act of violence, pure and simple, because it hurt the child's face. Similarly, when a man uses words against his 'opponent so called' which are likely to hurt his feelings or, as you put it, wound his susceptibilities, then quite regardless of his non-violent intention behind his words, he has been violent in word simply because he has hurt his so-called opponent's feelings, just as the father hurt his child's face in the instance given You say further on: 'The acid test of non-violence is that one thinks, speaks and acts non-violently even when there is the gravest provocation to be violent' Here again I do not agree with you The acid test of non-violence is that one thinks, speaks and acts in a manner so as not to hurt 'the opponent so called' in body, mind or spirit, even when there is the gravest

[1] *Vide* "What is Non-violence?", pp. 151-3.

provocation to be violent It is true where you say "If non-violence of thought is to be evolved in individuals or societies or nations, truth has to be told, however harsh or unpopular it may appear to be for the moment.' But it is not true that harsh truth must be told in harsh words, when a gentler mode of expressing the same ideas might have, with a little more patience, self-control and goodwill, been used against the party opposing In that discussion how strong in contrast stood Mr. Andrews' gentler mode of arguing to the harsh mode of your expression! In this harshness which you, Mahatmaji, with your habitual and exemplary calm, patience and self-control might have easily avoided, lay, I repeat, your 'violence in word' against the missionaries in general

With my best wishes for your health and strength,

As always yours,
A S WADIA

POONA
Jan. 10, 1937

PS

You are at liberty to print this letter in my name in the *Harijan*, if you so wish

I gladly publish the foregoing. But I profoundly differ from the view presented by Shri Wadia. The smacking of a boy, if it is not done out of anger and impatience, is most decidedly not violence as when he is, say, bitten by a snake and it is necessary to keep him awake or as when a youngster in high fever was running amuck and came to his senses only after he was severely smacked. It caused hurt, but he would most assuredly have died if he had not been smacked. Every surgeon causes hurt, but he is every time not only not violent but benevolent and receives thanks and heavy fees for causing hurt, sometimes very serious indeed. He does not conform to Shri Wadia's definition, he does wholly conform to mine. According to my learned correspondent, Jesus Christ was hopelessly violent when he called some people of his times 'a generation of vipers'. His phrases and his actions so hurt his generation that they compassed his death. And if truth can be harsh, as the writer admits it can be, what is the gentle way of uttering it so that you can render it proof against your opponent's wrath? If a man utters a downright lie or commits a daylight robbery or a murder, am I to call this brother of mine, as he most assuredly is, a liar or a thief or a murderer, or am I to use

Churchillian language and say 'he perambulates round the suburbs of veracity,' or 'he helps himself to the goods that do not belong to him without perhaps any intention of stealing,' or 'he spills innocent blood, though perhaps he does not want to kill?' And if I were to use such circumlocutory speech, is there the slightest guarantee that I shall never hurt the party of whom I may be speaking? Harsh truth may be uttered courteously and gently, but the words would read hard. To be truthful you must call a liar a liar—a harsh word perhaps, but the use is inevitable. In the instance to which Shri Wadia has taken exception, I have no sense of repentance.

I suggest to my friend that like many good people he has allowed his judgment to be warped by the nobility of the actions of missionaries in that they have founded schools, hospitals and the like. Whereas, giving the fullest due for their philanthropic activities, my sober judgment tells me that the lustre of their deeds is diminished by the motive of proselytizing that lies behind them. I may be wrong in my estimate of religious conduct and proselytizing itself. That does not make my characterization in any sense violent.

Therefore I am not going to subscribe to Shri Wadia's judgment or his comparison of Deenabandhu Andrews at my expense in matters of non-violence. And if he really believes that I am gifted with 'habitual and exemplary calm, patience and self-control', I want to assure him that on the occasion referred to I had not lost any of the virtues he imputes to me. This is not to say that I never lose self-control. I do indeed, and those are occasions of my shame. If Shri Wadia has had no occasion to observe them it is because of the hard training I have given myself of exercising self-control in public life and especially in respect of those who regard me as their enemy. But I cannot say the same of my private life. Those who are nearest me do alas! know how impatient I can be with them, even to the extent of behaving like a wild bear let loose. I know that even with them I must not lose patience. They very generously suffer me for they are quite sure that I mean no ill to them but am their best friend and guide. Their certificate, however, is of little worth to me. It has never deceived me. I know that I would be a better man and their better guide if I could regard them with sufficient detachment and not take it amiss when, in my opinion, they fall short of the standard they have themselves accepted for their daily conduct. But the detachment prescribed by the *Gita* is the hardest thing to achieve, and

yet it is so absolutely necessary for perfect peace and for the vision of both the little self and the greatest Self.

Harijan, 6-2-1937

348. KHADI IN ANDHRADESH

Whilst I was taking the meeting on the 23rd January last at Guntur, the following letter from Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya was put in my hands:

> Your programme in Andhradesh is so short and so congested that I do not feel justified in obtruding myself upon your notice to the detriment of others' chances But I am tempted to request you to make a pointed reference if possible in your Bezwada speech in regard to the position of khaddar in Andhradesh where some of the certified producers are taking advantage of the increase in prices without observing the conditions essential to such increase But both the certified and A I S A sales have fallen on account of competition of the uncertified producers who are obviously at an advantage, even granting that they sell pure khaddar. A manifesto has been drafted and is being influentially signed by friends representing all shades of opinion in Andhra, a copy of which is enclosed In one word the sales have gone down in certified shops, and the public may therefore be warned by you against the purchase of uncertified cloth, and the new definition of khaddar as 'hand-spun and hand-woven cloth prepared on the increased wage' may be given publicity once again I may add that while most of the certified people are being decertified on account of lapses, a few have sought decertification voluntarily for the obvious advantages it brings under the present conditions, and that is a lesson by itself to us that their sales not only do not suffer but improve by decertification So it is the public that must cultivate the right judgment in the matter

There was no time to refer to it at the meeting and I would not mix up khadi work with an appeal for funds for cyclone relief. I did not therefore refer to it even in my subsequent speech at Bezwada. The subject matter of the letter is nevertheless very important. Andhra has possibilities not open to any other province. It has an innate skill which the other provinces do not possess. But some Andhra merchants, as elsewhere, are greedy and for a few paltry coppers would injure even khadi, the mainstay of the villagers, the staff of *Daridranarayana*

and the indispensable friend of the widow. What is worse, however, is want of co-operation among even the tallest khadi workers. Among the causes of Andhra's fall in the matter of khadi I had a painful eye-opener at Vinaya Ashram. Everybody in Andhradesh knows my partiality for Sitarama Sastry and my regard for Deshabhakta Venkatappayya. The former is the disciple of the latter. Deshabhakta's word is law for Sitarama Sastry. Both are all the emotion in which Andhra seems to have specialized. But Venkatappayya is a weak *guru*—generous and forgiving to a fault. My partiality for Sitarama Sastry kept me in ignorance of what in my opinion was an unpardonable omission in a khadi-lover and representative of the A. I. S. A. On reaching Vinaya Ashram in the dark hours of the morning on 23rd ultimo, I asked for a wheel and was shocked to discover that they had 19 wheels which were out of order and not in use. They had a *Yeravda-chakra* which was produced but which was also out of order, though not wholly unworkable. They had no carding-bow. And to my dismay I found that no one knew carding in Vinaya Ashram and that those who span did so with slivers purchased in the market. My heart wept. I gave vent to my feeling of grief and disappointment. I quoted in bitterness, 'if the salt loseth its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?' Poor Sitarama Sastry was dumb. Tears trickled down Venkatappayya's cheeks. And during our rush in motor-cars Venkatappayya promised to repair the blunder in two months' time, and said in tones of confidence that Sastry would prepare himself in the manner I expected and that the Vinaya Ashram would hum with the sweet sound of the charkha and the carding-bow. Sitarama Sastry was present and he vowed to redeem the promise of his chief.

To err—even grievously—is human. But it is human only if there is a determination to mend the error and not to repeat it. The error will be forgotten if the promise is fully redeemed. And I know both these friends too well to fear that it will not be redeemed.

Now the reader will realize why khadi has not made the progress it should have. It has made progress worthy of note because it has innate virtue. But it cannot cover every village unless the agents of the A. I. S. A. fulfil the expectations they know they have to fulfil. They must know at least the elements of the science of khadi in terms of the questions I published the other day. Much more searching questions have to be answered by a master of the science of khadi.

Let not any reader run away with the idea that I have strayed from the simple subject matter of Dr. Pattabhi's letter. That is merely a symptom of the disease whose root cause I have ventured to bring to light. When Vinaya Ashram installs the wheel as the central sun in its fulness, uncertified dealers will for the very shame cease to stab *Daridranarayana* in the back by hampering the experiment of giving the lowest-paid workers, the spinners, their due.

Harijan, 6-2-1937

349. LETTER TO RAMDAS

SEGAON, WARDHA,
February 6, 1937

BHAI RAMDAS,

I got your letter. The report is very good and useful. Is there a copy of it? Because I want to keep this. If there is not I shall have another copy made. I need you for two or three days for the road-building work in Segaon. Come when you can spare the time but let me know of it in advance.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 8589. Also C.W. 7006. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

350. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

February 6, 1937

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

I got your letter. Sharda has reached an age when, unless she offers her sincere co-operation, she cannot improve. In my opinion, at present her only duty is to build up good health. For that she should give up study. This does not mean that she should read nothing. She may by all means read something that she will enjoy reading. But she should feel no strain at all in that. She should stop reading the moment she feels tired. She should read nothing regularly but should do physical labour daily. She should take slow walks in the open air

at regular hours. She should have hip-baths and friction-baths. She should do slow *pranayama*. There is no harm at all in having hip-baths in the condition that you have described, provided that at the time of taking the bath she does not feel cold. After leaving the tub she should do light exercise and pour warm water over the body. The whole body should be massaged daily. She should take sun-bath, without any clothes on. This can be easily done in any open place. An enclosure can be made by hanging mats all round to ensure privacy. If sun-bath is taken on a sand-covered ground like what we have in a gymnasium, she can take the bath even rolling on the ground. This treatment involves no expense. All that is necessary is to have faith and to spare the necessary time. If there is no faith, the treatment may become a burden and cause strain on the mind. An asthmatic person can never afford strain. Nerves play a very important part in causing asthma. If Sharda's diet does not include milk and butter, she should get sufficient ghee. She may eat fenugreek leaves, amaranth, mustard leaves, *dabho* and other green leaves, uncooked ripe tomatoes, gourd, brinjals, pumpkin, etc. These things should be steam-cooked. No condiment should be used not even oil or ghee for frying. Ghee or butter may be added afterwards. She should eat some juicy fruit if available. She may eat fresh garlic crushed and mixed with vegetables. Let her start with half a *tola*. It must not be cooked at all. She may eat onions also, either cooked or raw. Both will benefit her.

You may ask about anything else if you want to.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S G. 20

351. MILL-WORKERS AND MILL-OWNERS

Some of the points of dispute which arose between the mill-owners and mill-workers of Ahmedabad, were referred for arbitration and its result has been announced. Both the parties deserve to be congratulated on their having agreed to refer the issue to arbitration in this manner. And the mill-owners also on having accepted the Award. The Umpire also deserves to be congratulated on having given his Award along with many arguments merely out of a spirit of service

without charging any fee. All of us hope that all disputes arising between the two parties will always be speedily resolved through arbitration. It is clear enough for everyone to understand that by accepting the Award of the Umpire both the parties, as also the industry on which the prosperity of Ahmedabad depends, have gained.

But my object in writing this article is not to examine the situation in the past or to praise the principal parties concerned. My object is to find means by which future security could be ensured. I have hinted at these means in clause 16 of my Award. I quote it below along with the clause that follows:

XVI At this stage I would like to restate the principles that for the good of both parties I have presented to them as a result of my close and unbroken contact with the industry for a period of 18 years in the capacity of Arbitrator

(a) No cut should be made till the mills have ceased to make any profit and are obliged to fall back upon their capital for continuing the industry.

(b) There should be no cut till the wages have reached the level adequate for maintenance It is impossible to conceive a time when the workmen have begun to regard the industry as if it were their own property and they would then be prepared to help it out of a crisis by taking the barest maintenance consisting of a dry crust and working day and night That would be a voluntary arrangement. Such cases are irrelevant to the present consideration

(c) There should be a common understanding as to what should be included in determining a living wage

(d) The consideration of the deterioration in individual mills cannot form part of a case for a cut in wages of labour in general

(e) It is vital to the well-being of the industry that workmen should be regarded as equals with the shareholders and that they have therefore every right to possess an accurate knowledge of the transactions of the mills.

(f) There should be a register of all available mill-hands acceptable to both the parties and the custom of taking labour through any other than the T. L A. should be stopped,

XVII I have not presented these principles in the belief that they will be acceptable either to my brother Arbitrator or to the mill-owners or even to the workmen These have not guided my decision in the present case but I am convinced that without the acceptance of these principles the industry i.e., the owners and the workmen are in danger.

The Umpire has described these principles as idealistic and incapable of being implemented.[1] He did not have to pass judgment on those points. I had merely jotted them down in my Award for my own satisfaction and with the object that they might prove useful to both parties in future. Hence, it is possible that the Umpire has not given serious thought to them. And as I have a reputation for being an idealist, a dreamer and an unpractical person, the Umpire did not fully examine these principles, as he was not bound to do, and it is likely that he did not approve of them because of the unfavourable impression he had of the person who had put them forward.

I must accept the allegation that I make my ideal the standard by which to judge others. But I must also say that I am no enemy of what is practical. My life has been spent, and is still being spent, in putting the ideal into practice. I believe that I have achieved some success in my effort. I entreat the two parties and the readers to forget me and examine the principles which I have put forward independently.

The Umpire has strongly recommended that mill-owners should speedily take a decision regarding the scale of wages applicable to all mills and with the same speed frame a scheme whereby an increase or decrease in wages can be effected automatically. In my humble opinion, while trying to implement these two points speedily, the assistance of the principles suggested by me in one form or another will become indispensable. In addition to the principles put forward by me, others no doubt will have to be thought out. Nevertheless a consideration of the principles suggested by me is necessary.

The first point that has to be settled in the scheme for automatic decrease or increase in wages is the lowest point in wage reduction. While deciding this one factor, all my six points will have to be taken into consideration. It may well not be accepted that a wage-cut can be made only when mills have ceased to make any profit; but a ceiling on profits should definitely be laid down. In giving a practicable shape to this there is no escape from making absence of profit, that is to say, the ideal, our standard. (16 A)

[1] The Umpire's Award said "Even while I do homage to their idealistic and humanitarian spirit, they are, I think, inconsistent with the hard realities of economic production for profit and survival by competition in an open market (*History of Wage Adjustments in the Ahmedabad Industry*, Vol IV, p 24)

Before fixing a standard for wage-cut it is necessary to decide what should be called a living wage. (16 B)

If a consideration of the living wage is regarded as essential, it is absolutely necessary to consider what are the items to be included in it. (16 C)

While considering a cut in the wages of the entire body of workers a consideration of the plight of any individual mill necessarily becomes irrelevant. (16 D)

In order that workers may be able to accept the demands of the mill-owners they should have the right to know about the detailed working of the mill. (16 E)

And, in order that workers may willingly accept a cut in wages and to reassure them, it will become absolutely necessary to keep a register of all possible labourers. (16 F)

The Mill-owners' Association will have to gain greater control over the mills than it enjoys at present if the principle of arbitration is to become permanent. It will collapse if the individuals ignore the Mill-owners' Association while pursuing their own interests alone. Similarly, if workers pursue their own interest and violate the rules of the Labour Association the principle of arbitration will cease to operate. In order to prevent such an eventuality uniform scales of pay should be introduced everywhere. If, while doing so, a particular mill is put to a strain, the other mills should get together and compensate it. Similarly, whenever it is found that workers have to suffer, those among them who stand to gain should compensate the loss to those who would be adversely affected. I am also of the opinion that the practice of having different scales of wages for labourers working in different departments should be abolished and uniform wages should be accepted for all labourers. I know that this may seem to be an impossible task, but a further consideration will show that the need for this will become obvious if the united strength of labourers is to be made invincible. Why should anyone working the power-loom for sixty hours get Rs. 30, while a person looking after the spindle for the same number of hours gets Rs. 13? It would not be proper to conclude that the former has to work more than the latter. It is not also fitting for one labourer to say that he has to use more intelligence than another. So long as such discrepancies exist, jealousies are bound to be there and, as long as there is jealousy, there can be no true unity. This problem, at root, is of some educational value to labourers and to society as a whole. In my view, the key to socialism lies in equal pay for

equal work. Everyone's basic needs are more or less the same. The larger part of the world will always consist of labourers, hence the only way for their uplift is to accept the principle of equal wages. There is no other way but to do so. It is likely that all this may appear to be the talk of someone who lives in a dream world. But unless workers make such dreams come true, their real authority, which is only a dream today, will always remain so.

Yes, there is one exception. If workers wish to establish their authority with the use of arms, that is, through force, it may appear to be possible. This article is based on the assumption that the workers of Ahmedabad have given up violence on principle. But, for the moment, let us assume that the working class is even prepared to use force. My contention is that there is every likelihood of a struggle taking place amongst them as soon as they get power. Be that as it may, because I am a worshipper of non-violence alone, I can wield my pen only to uphold non-violent means. My mind cannot even conceive of the triumph of any other means. Hence, I shall have betrayed the workers if I do not put before them for their consideration what has been uppermost in my mind while reflecting upon their plight during the past three or four months. If workers cannot digest these important changes all at once, let them move step by step. But they must set it as their aim that there should be the same scale of wages for all workers.

This much is sufficient for today.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 7-2-1937

352. LETTER TO BEHRAMJI KHAMBHATTA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
February 7, 1937

BHAI KHAMBHATTA,

I got your letter. Your wishes regarding the money and the ring will be respected. It is not proper that you don't write. Even two lines on a postcard would be enough for me.

I do keep myself informed about you. It would be better, however, if I had at least one postcard regularly from you once in a fortnight or a month.

When I was in Poona, I got the news about the set-back in your health. You have tried a good many remedies. But now I would advise you to go and consult Gaurishankar, who is a Government servant living in Santa Cruz and who practises nature cure with a purely philanthropic motive. Go to him and tell him your trouble. If he takes up your case, follow his advice. Mahadev will give his address with this and also enclose a letter to him.

Please don't send me any money by putting yourself to inconvenience. If, however, you save money beyond your need, you are welcome to send it all.

May you both prosper.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N. 7559. Also C.W. 5034. Courtesy: Tehmina Khambhatta

353. *LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA*

February 7, 1937

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

The right hand demands rest, so I write with it only on Mondays. On the other days I dictate letters, as writing with the left hand is rather time-consuming.

Parameshwari has drafted and sent a proposal which is in accordance with the opinion I have come to form regarding his future. If you have no objection please sign it and send it to me. No one knows what it will come to in the end. But this provides a good opportunity for Parameshwari to prove his mettle and he should have such opportunity. Jamnalalji's signature has already been obtainkd.

Parnerkar must have reached there by now. I shall recall Pandya whenever you want me to. Why should we delay any cuts in expenditure that may be considered necessary in respect of the Harijan [Sevak Sangh] central office? Of course we shall not be able to do anything that Thakkar Bapa does not approve of. If in connection with all this you consider it proper to come to Wardha on your way to Delhi, please do so.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 8033. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

354 LETTER TO BALWANTSINHA

February 7, 1937

CHI. BALWANTSINHA,

I have your letter.

The cow has arrived.[1] An account will be maintained. You must follow the doctor's instructions.

The question of your leaving Segaon does not arise. Your illness is not incurable, nor is it likely to be a prolonged one. Why should you become so discouraged in only two or three days? Your letter smacks of lack of faith. You have a few boils, you do not even give yourself full treatment and you become frightened that they will never go. What is this? You must have the conviction that you are going to get well, and that quickly, and that in order to get well you will scrupulously obey the doctor's or the vaidya's advice in so far as you have no conscientious objection to it. You should not become a prey to gloomy thoughts. Why should you worry about carrying out my decision? It is of no great significance.[2] Supposing I keep an ailing person in Segaon so as to nurse him. It surely is not going to harm me in any way. Your concern should be only to get well and then soon to come and look after the cows. Your concern should be, also, your hot temper.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi. G.N. 1891

355. LETTER TO SHANMUKHAM CHETTY

February 8, 1937

MY DEAR SHANMUKHAM,

Your addressing me familiarly revives old memories and old flavours. I reciprocate.

[1] The cow had been sent by the addressee from Wardha.

[2] Gandhiji had earlier said that only those who were perfectly fit would be allowed to live in Segaon.

I like your frank letter. What I expect you to do is to pull your weight in the right direction. The reform must not be confined to the borders of Travancore. You can do a great deal to avoid the subtle persecution that must be going on there of the Nambudiris who have dared to accept the Travancore Proclamation.[1]

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy Narayan Desai

356. LETTER TO BHARATAN KUMARAPPA

February 8, 1937

MY DEAR BHARATAN,

I have just read your note[2]. It is good so far as it goes It is going in just as it is. Read my article[3] in the current issue and offer your comments if any or write more.

Love to you both.

BAPU

From a photostat G N 3592

357. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

SEGAON,
February 9, 1937

CHI. LILA,

I got your letter. It was good to hear that your brother's health was improving fast. When he is permitted to leave Bombay, I would prefer Matheran to Rajkot if he is quite fit then to go out for walks. The water at Matheran contains iron and is, therefore, supposed to be heavy But it is very good for those who can take walks. The climate of course is good. But Matheran is not a good place if one has to remain in bed. From the point

[1] The addressee was Dewan of Cochin and had written to Gandhiji that there was no persecution in Cochin.

[2] Presumably this was Kumarappa's contribution published in *Harijan*, 20-3-1937, under the title "The Coming National Week".

[3] Presumably "Khadi in Andhra Desh"; *vide* pp. 348-50.

of view of expenses, there is no doubt that Rajkot is cheaper than Matheran.

As regards eating, there is only one way for you: you should ponder over the eleven vows every morning and evening. That means you tell God, with the world as your witness, that you ceaselessly strive to keep them. These vows include the vow of non-indulgence of the palate. You and I, therefore, and all others who regularly ponder on that vow cannot eat a single morsel for gratifying the palate. We can eat merely to sustain the body and keep it alive.

The sole reason for the exclusion of condiments from our food is the vow of non-indulgence of the palate.

One can eat even chillies as medicine. But one cannot take even salt for the pleasure of the palate. If you keep pondering over the meaning of these vows and live accordingly, you will earn the merit of living here no matter where you are staying. On the contrary, even if you live here and go on repeating the vows in words but do not strive constantly to keep them, you will only be deceiving yourself by living here. It will not, therefore, be proper if, having gone there for service, you become negligent in keeping the vows.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N 9356 Also C.W. 6631 Courtesy. Lilavati Asar

358. LETTER TO NATHUBHAI

February 9, 1937

BHAI NATHUBHAI,

I got both your letters. I am replying[1] to the first question in *Harijanbandhu*. Please see it. Very few persons would be interested in the other questions, and so I am replying to them here.

The vegetarians may keep meat-eating animals, but they should not procure meat for them, e.g., the cat and the dog. Both are carnivorous, but we do not procure meat for them.

I know the Jain belief. I knew the ideas of Raichandbhai, but I am convinced that they are not consistent with the ethics

[1] *Vide* p. 368

of ahimsa. From the point of view of ahimsa, uncooked things should be considered sufficient for the needs of the body. Drying, pickling and cooking are forms of violent possessiveness and should, therefore, be eschewed I see no meaning in the distinction that is made between tubers and other vegetables In Jain literature ahimsa has been confined only to a discussion of what should be eaten and what should not be eaten. This, in my view, is a travesty of ahimsa. I have seen non-vegetarians who are the very images of compassion and hence I consider them to be votaries of ahimsa in spite of their being non-vegetarians. I have also seen people who, although avoiding green vegetables, etc , gratify their palate in all sorts of ways and are full of cruelty. I believe that they are a disgrace to dharma. I also believe that had Raichandbhai not died prematurely, he would have fully endorsed what I am saying here now. To say that a fast is broken by cleaning the teeth or by taking a bath is, in my opinion, sheer ignorance. Those who are completely free from passions and are living in uninhabited forests, wearing no clothes and eating only fruit, etc., yielded by the trees, who meditate on God and roam about, for them it might not matter if they did not clean the teeth or take bath because leaves of *neem* trees are both their food and their means of cleaning the teeth. Earth and sun rays are their bath. It would be sheer ignorance to apply this, during a fast, to persons who are full of evil emotions, hold all kinds of possessions and whose every pore emits foul smell

As in curds, there are countless bacteria in milk also, a far greater number of them than in plants, tubers, etc. To distinguish among vegetables as some that may be eaten and others that must be avoided, and at the same time to take milk, etc , freely, is like stealing an anvil and giving a needle in alms

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G N 6248

359. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

February 9, 1937

BHAI KRISHNACHANDRA,

I have your letter. What I wrote was correct. I have not consulted anyone so far but my feeling is that you can be accommodated in the high school here. You can be useful for teaching

Hindi, English or mathematics Or you can be given some other work, such as would justify Rs 75 a month being paid to you. It is also possible that I may not be able to fix you at Wardha. Then I can find some other place. But I can make enquiries only when I know that you are ready. But please understand that Rs. 75 is the beginning and the end of it. The start can be lower but Rs. 75 is as high as you can go. Your asking for more would lead to your degradation Think well and tell me if I should start working in this direction? Once you have accepted a position, I will not take a 'no' from you afterwards. If you have any terms and conditions to propose, write to me clearly Only then shall I try to do something. You should obtain the carding-bow.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G N 4279, also S G 56

360. LETTER TO BEHRAMJI KHAMBHATTA

SEGAON,
February 12, 1937

BHAI KHAMBHATTA,

You should of course not leave Pandit half way Go to Gaurishankar only if Pandit's treatment does not suit you. It is certainly our dharma to try, within limits, to cure physical suffering. But it is also our dharma to bear it cheerfully, knowing that all suffering comes only to test us.

Blessings from

BAPU

SHRI BEHRAMJI KHAMBHATTA
DE BELVEDERE COURT
CHURCH GATE RECLAMATION
BOMBAY

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 6612 Also C W 4403 Courtesy Tehmina Khambhatta

361. AHMEDABAD MILL INDUSTRY

Now that the Ahmedabad Mill Industry has tided over the difficulty that had arisen over the mill-owners' demand for a cut in the wages of labour, it is well to examine the conditions of its stability. The Umpire, Sir Govindrao Madgavkar, deserves the thanks of both the parties for his great labour of love. The public do not know that he undertook the onerous burden without any fees which he might have insisted upon, if he had so chosen. Having entered upon the task he might have lightened it by merely giving his decision without any argument. Instead he has reasoned out his Award and made valuable suggestions for the guidance of both capital and labour.

It is to be hoped that both parties will whole-heartedly act up to the Umpire's suggestion and work out the Delhi agreement. The Umpire has made it perfectly clear that no cut is possible without fully implementing the Delhi agreement which has also the merit of being turned into an award of the then Umpire, Mr. Patkar, retired High Court Judge. The essential conditions of that agreement are that wages must be standardized for the whole mill industry and that there should be a scheme for automatic adjustment whenever there is a demand for a cut or a rise in the wages. It has been argued on behalf of the mill-owners that neither standardization nor automatic adjustment is a practical proposition. The Umpire has rejected that argument. Indeed he could not do otherwise. Surely the parties knew what they were doing when they entered into the agreement at Delhi. They would never have introduced the two clauses if they had thought them to be unworkable. It may be that the parties may not agree to a common scheme It is for them to refer their differences then to the arbitrators and, the latter failing, to an Umpire. Standardization of wages is a mechanical or arithmetical proposition. It may be that an intermediate stage is necessary before all the mills can be induced to adopt an even scale of wages or labour can in all cases be induced to accept a level which in some case must mean a large reduction in wages though the whole total remains unaffected. But a scheme of automatic adjustment of wages is undoubtedly a complicated matter. It demands for its fruition a spirit of give and take on both sides. And any such scheme must, in the

nature of things, be of a temporary character subject to periodical revision.

No scheme of automatic adjustment is possible without reference to the maxims I have ventured to mention in my Award and which Sir Govindrao has been pleased to dismiss as idealistic. Of course it was no part of his duty as Umpire to examine or refer to them at all. I have myself stated in my Award that the maxims have not guided my decision. But having referred to them at all, the learned Umpire might have shown how or why they were idealistic.

I propose to show that whether they are idealistic or otherwise it is impossible to arrive at a satisfactory scheme of automatic adjustment without reference to them. They must be the measuring rod for action which may and will probably fall short of it. Let me reproduce below a translation[1] of the original which is in Gujarati:

Now take the first maxim. Why should mills desire a cut so long as they have profits? It would be like a man desiring to cut off his feet to ease some derangement of the belly. Do they cut out machinery in order to ensure a certain percentage of profits? Are men and women who may be called living machines less than inert machinery? Is there anything very idealistic in the suggestion that the wages of the operatives, who are at least as much a foundation of the industry as the machinery and buildings, may not be reduced to ensure a minimum of profits? I make bold to say that if the votes of humane shareholders (and I regard the shareholders of mills as humane) were taken, they would summarily reject the proposition that their profits should be preferred to the wages of labour on whom depend their profits.

And if the first maxim must at least be seriously considered, the second about the living wage follows from it. If there can be no cut before profits are on the brink of sinking, it is necessary to know the limit beyond which reduction in wages cannot go. In other words, there must be a decision as to what constitutes a living wage. I am not concerned with the name. Call it the minimum wage, if that expression sounds sweeter. The process is the same. Living wage to my mind is the most accurate description for an irreducible wage.

And the acceptance of the principle of a living wage implies an examination of what may be included in it. Should intoxicants form part, should tobacco be included, may milk or ghee or

[1] Not reproduced here For the text, *vide* clauses XVI and XVII of "Award Labour Dispute", pp 181-2.

gur be excluded? These are no visionary things. They touch the very existence of labour. Its efficiency depends very largely upon the right kind of living And the greater the efficiency, the greater the possibility of enhanced profits

Maxim (d) is self-evident and accepted by the arbitrators as well as the Umpire.

Who can deny the reasonableness of the statement (Maxim c) that workmen should be regarded as equal owners with the shareholders? If conflict between capital and labour is to be avoided, as I believe it can and must be, labour should have the same status and dignity as capital. Why should a million rupees put together be more than a million men or women put together? Are they not infinitely more than metal, white or yellow? Or should holders of metal always assume that labour cannot be organized and put together as metal can? For the past eighteen years, consciously or unconsciously, capital and labour have acted in Ahmedabad on the assumption that there is no inherent conflict between the two. It is true that peace between the two has been precarious. But it has been so because the parties have not recognized the full validity of the maxims as the conditions of an abiding peace.

If then labourers are co-equal owners, their organization should have the same access to the transactions of mills as the shareholders. Indeed there can be no confidence on the part of labour if material information is withheld from it.

The last maxim admits of no weakening. If the Labour Union is regarded as a desirable organization as much as is the mill-owners', and is not merely tolerated as a necessary evil, it follows that there should be an agreed register of available hands and that the mill-owners should not accept or engage any person outside the Labour Union.

Thus it seems to me that the maxims are not visionary, but on examination they are found to be absolutely essential to the healthy existence or growth of the great industry in whose interest they have been humbly suggested.

It need not be stated that the list submitted is by no means exhaustive. I must suggest some more, when I am able to revert to the question.

Harijan, 13-2-1937

362. A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION

The following[1] was received just after I had finished the Travancore pilgrimage:

The letter is from a retired principal of a college and deserves attention I have already drawn attention to the many implications of the Proclamation. But I have not touched in that connection the question of inter-dining. My views in the matter are well known. Restrictions on inter-dining have no vital connection with varnadharma. They were, in my opinion, hygienic rules in origin. Given a proper conformity with the rules of cleanliness there should be no scruple about dining with anybody. And training Harijan boys and girls as members of a family ensures cleanliness and raises their status and removes in the safest manner the insane caste restrictions on inter-dining. I fully agree with the writer of the letter quoted that equality all along the line is implied in the Proclamation. The young Maharaja has given the lead. Will the people of Travancore follow it in all its implications?

Harijan, 13-2-1937

363. WHAT KHADI WORKERS SHOULD KNOW[2]

In previous article I have tried to explain what should be covered by the science of khadi. In my opinion it should be made obligatory on every khadi worker engaged in any of the production centres of the A. I. S. A. to know the elements of this science. Sjt. Lakshmidas is a khadi lover and one of the most careful students of the science of khadi that we have. But I would not call even him a master of the science. In the course of a letter which he addressed me in November 1935, he laid down what he considered to be the minimum test which every khadi worker ought to satisfy. The test is reproduced below:

(1) The worker should know how to distinguish between superior and inferior grades of cotton, cotton-seed and lint.

[1] Not reproduced here. The correspondent had suggested that to make the Proclamation a real success people should introduce inter-dining and also employ poor Harijans as cooks and domestic servants

[2] Translated by Pyarelal from the original in Gujarati

(2) He should be able to fix in position the rolling pin of a hand-ginning machine and to make the necessary correction and adjustment to make it exactly fit with the fixed roller, when the former happens to be bent or of unequal thickness

(3) He should be able to fit up a carding-bow and to prepare the gut and the hide piece for the shoulder-blade.

(4) He should be able to show a ginning speed of five pounds an hour on a hand-ginning machine over a period of four hours

(5) He must show a carding speed of ten *tolas* of cotton wool per hour, excluding the time required for making slivers

(6) He must know the construction of every type of spinning-wheel and how to assemble it. He must be able to straighten a spindle gone out of shape and to prepare the *mal* and the *daman* the cross bands of the motor wheel

(7) He must be able to maintain a spinning speed of 300 rounds (400 yards) of yarn of 20^s, with a tensile strength of over 80% and evenness 95% in a four hours' test

(8) He should know the Andhra process of spinning and must be able to spin 200 rounds of 70^s to 80^s, strength 80% and evenness 95% during a two hours' test

(9) He should know the construction of a pit loom as well as a fly-shuttle loom and be able to prepare together the reeds, the healds and the sizing brush.

(10) He should be able to weave khadi of 50″ width on a fly-shuttle loom from yarn of 20^s and to make all necessary adjustments to produce at least five different kinds of border designs for saris

(11) The speed of weaving should come up to one square yard in an hour from yarn of 20^s.

(12) He should know all about the growing of different varieties of cotton and should be able to get hand-gins, carding-bows, spinning-wheels, looms and their accessories locally prepared, preferably out of local material This would involve a knowledge of

(a) Rainfall, its extent and distribution over different parts of the year, and a knowledge of manures and the nature of the soil

(b) Different kinds of wood and of calculations relating to measurement.

(c) A workable knowledge of drawing for the above-mentioned needs

(13) A knowledge of carpentry sufficient for repairing the various machines

It is not quite easy to fulfil this test. But given sufficient earnestness and a measure of diligence, anyone who has had a fair

education in this should be able to satisfy Sjt. Lakshmidas's test. That would, however, still leave uncovered the commercial aspect of the science of khadi. That is covered by the questions drawn up by me. The syllabus prepared by Sjt. Lakshmidas is calculated to cover the technical side. One must be an adept in both these fields before he can be said to be versed in the elements of the science of khadi. I shall feel thankful if such khadi workers as may happen to read this article, and can satisfy the technical or the commercial test or both, will send me their full names and addresses. Similarly those who are eager to qualify themselves in the elementary science of khadi should also communicate with me. Unluckily today we have no suitable text-books that could be used to impart the required knowledge. The only available book that somewhat answers the purpose is that of late Sjt. Maganlal Gandhi. But even that book is now out of date owing to the advance that the science of khadi has made since that book was written. A revised edition of that book is therefore urgently needed. That can come about only if we have lovers of khadi who would devote themselves to the revision and have the leisure for the work.

Harijan, 13-2-1937

364. LETTER TO SARLADEVI

February 13, 1937

CHI. SARLA,

I had got your letter. I am late in replying. Won't you forgive me for it? In fact there is nothing in your letter which calls for a reply. But I think I ought to reply. Since you yourself have become a devi[1], need I suffix 'devi' to your name? How old are you? How do you spend your time, or waste it? Don't be shocked to see this sheet ragged [at the edges]. Such paper is made by the poor nowadays It is not made with machines. Do you keep the poor in your thoughts?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G N 6640. Also C.W. 4289

[1] Goddess

365. LETTER TO SURESH SINGH

February 13, 1937

BHAI SURESH SINGH,

I have your letter. Come over whenever you feel like it. I hope that everything is proceeding smoothly and there is no discord in the family.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi G N 8690

366. MY NOTES

THE PROBLEM IN REVERSE

A Hindu gentleman having read my reply[1] to a Muslim gentleman's letter in the *Harijanbandhu* of 31-1-1937 writes to say.[2]

I feel that the reply to this question is contained in what I had written previously. In that case, the Muslim gentleman had introduced a new custom and consequently had to put up with the orthodoxy of his relations. In this case, people wish to give up their existing tradition and eat meat A vegetarian Hindu is by no means bound to encourage them. It depends no each individual as to how far he is prepared to abandon existing tradition in such matters. Those who regard giving up meat as a part of religion are likely to find it intolerable if other members of the family eat meat. We should follow ahimsa dharma or the religion of love in all our conduct. There should be no anger towards those who give up their religion, they should be won over through love alone. How this may be done, is to be considered in each particular case.

WRONG THINKING

A co-worker committed an error in a fit of rage I explained

[1] *Vide* "Need for Tolerance", pp 330-2

[2] The letter has not been translated here The correspondent had stated that Gandhiji's reply to the Muslim gentleman might be in conformity with Islam but it was not in conformity with Hinduism He had asked whether it was proper for a vegetarian to buy meat for his family members.

to him that it was a grave error and that he should atone for it by apologizing to the person he had wronged. He admitted his fault and also the need for apologizing but he told me that he was not worthy of what I had asked him to do, that he had not risen so high and was not capable of doing so at one stroke. After that, this co-worker saw his mistake. He is a mature and balanced person. The object of writing this is merely to show that like this co-worker, many of us are given to erroneous thinking. To apologize for an offence which has already been committed is even less than paying back a debt without any interest. It can be compared to a promise to repay a debt, as an offence already committed is not wiped out by an apology; but it does imply a promise not to commit such an offence in the future. No debtor to this day has argued that he is not fit to repay his debts. It may happen that at that moment he does not have a sufficient sum to repay his debts. However, it would provoke laughter if a debtor argued that he was unworthy of repaying his debts. This may even be regarded as impudence. But in moral matters, very often people deceive themselves. Impatience and subtle pride lie at the root of this. If this were not the case, how could we fail to see something which is as clear as daylight? We do not have the capacity to do many things. And there is no room for any effort if, because of this want of ability, we regard ourselves as unfit for that task. Hence no one should consider himself unworthy of doing any good work. No one should doubt that repeated efforts are certain to make us capable of doing it.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 14-2-1937

367. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
February 14, 1937

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I got your letter.

Whatever Valji may do, you cannot come out of Saurashtra in the manner suggested by you. I can understand your resorting to satyagraha just to oppose the Foreigners' Act, after giving the Government a sufficiently long notice, though I wouldn't approve even of that.

I do not think you will have to wait long now. After the new constitution starts functioning, the Government will probably find it difficult to keep such notices in force. Meanwhile, you should write to the persons named by you and ask them what their aim is in disobeying the law. If I could write to them, I should be glad to do so, for that might lead to an opportunity for a pure fight and the Foreigners' Act might even go. But it is outside my present sphere of work to collect material for such a fight. However, if you have learnt anything from me, you can form an intelligent and firm plan on these few words of mine. Nineteen persons can do a lot.

The views which you have expressed are a sign of cowardice. It does not befit a satyagrahi to think of quietly disobeying a law, out of desperation and submitting to imprisonment or other consequences which might follow. The line, "Bathe and wash yourself and dress your hair, for the time has come to go to live with the beloved one", holds true of all satyagrahis. When a satyagrahi goes to battle, he does so after full preparation and with beating of drums, for he goes to jail as he would go to live in a palace To be merely ready to suffer the punishment if caught is not the right attitude for a satyagrahi to adopt. Even thieves and dacoits do that. Everyone who follows the way of violence risks his life when he embarks on his venture. Is not being confined to Kathiawar a form of imprisonment? If you are weary of such imprisonment, how would you bear banishment to the Andamans? But I will not dwell further on this subject. If I were to go on writing about it, I have so much to say that I would fill pages.

Your letter has opened not a small window but a big door in my brain, from which can pour out a flood of thoughts. But, however unwillingly, I must shut that door.

I am giving rest to my right hand these days, and so dictate the letters. On Mondays I cannot do without using the right hand. I can write with the left, but at present I cannot spare the time that this would require.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5542

368. *LETTER TO BALWANTSINHA*

February 14, 1937

BHAI BALWANTSINHA,

There is no reason for you to be overwrought. It is good you have placed yourself under the doctor's care. You are bound to be cured. Only do not give up patience. Doctors, vaidyas and hakims all make mistakes. The system precluding any possibility of mistake is nature cure. But very few people have the faith to carry it on and there are very few experienced practitioners.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1892

369. *LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,
February 15, 1937

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I feel ashamed that I am not able to write to you. I do remember that I have to write but can't because of the pressure of work. I will be more careful hereafter, even if it is only two lines that I can write, as is the case today. But please be content since there are long letters from Ba and Manu.

Krause has arrived. Probably he will be going back without seeing me because of two day's delay on my part. He got my letter late. I have a long letter from him. I have suggested that he should see Devdas.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4862

370. LETTER TO BALWANTSINHA

February 15, 1937

CHI. BALWANTSINHA,

How angry you can get! Such rage and such rudeness at a remark from an ignorant and idle boy[1]! You have broken all the vows! What do you know of my conversation with Prabhu Dayal? Shall I laugh or weep over your letter or be angry in return? Your letter is one to be wept over but I shall not weep. To give way to anger would be a sin and a bad example. I shall therefore laugh over this folly of yours. If you are tired you may certainly leave Segaon. But you should first come over with Prabhu Dayal and let me explain what happened. You may then do what you like. You need not come today. Come when you are all right. Consider as taboo the food prepared by Prabhu Dayal. Ask Chanchal[2]

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N 1893

371. LETTER TO DR. GOPICHAND BHARGAVA

February 16, 1937

DEAR DR. GOPICHAND,

Surely there is nothing intrinsically wrong in seeking election to Legislative Councils or Assemblies. Therefore, if there were any sin in your having done so it could only be if you felt that it was wrong to do so. Not because I had said so but because you had come to that conclusion independently. No *prayaschitta*[3] is necessary beyond this obvious thing that in terms of the constitution you should retire from the A.I.V.I.A. That retirement will be severely felt at least by me. But your not doing so will be still more terrible. You will still do whatever you can for the Association,

[1] Prabhu Dayal, who used to prepare the addressee's meals, mentioned this to Gandhiji and Gandhiji expressed disapproval. The conversation was conveyed in a garbled version to the addressee.

[2] Wife of Jhaverbhai Patel, a worker at Maganwadi

[3] Atonement

guiding whoever may be the agent of the Association. I know that this will not be the same thing as your being an active member but it will be the next best thing to do. You cannot be both a parliamentarian and an active worker in the cause of village uplift. A good parliamentarian's work is cut out for him—he too can make himself busy all day long if he is conscientious and wants to become an efficient parliamentarian.

Of course our personal relations will remain unaffected no matter what happens. In my opinion you have undoubtedly erred but you have erred in what you considered was a good cause. And the cause was good, only not for you because of your previous, definite and unequivocal commitment.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

DR. GOPICHAND BHARGAVA
MACHHIHATAN
LAHORE

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

372. LETTER TO GOSIBEHN CAPTAIN

February 16, 1937

I have your letter about Jajuji. You cannot be more sorry than I am about the resignation. I like him immensely. He is one of the most selfless men I have known and he is a most conscientious worker—absolutely reliable. He would never handle a thing which he cannot do. But he and Kumarappa cannot hit it off. They are temperamentally different and their method of work is different and Kumarappa finds it very hard to get on with him. Kumarappa too has the qualities that Jajuji possesses. We cannot do without either. Jajuji still remains a member of the Board. I thought, therefore, that the best way of dealing with the difficult situation that has arisen was to accept Jajuji's resignation but, of course, it is for the Board to decide. If there is any other way of dealing with the difficulty that way should be adopted. When the meeting takes place we shall consider all the ways and means.

I will send you as much *gur* as I can when I know of someone going to Bombay. You don't want to incur railway charges. I shall probably get Duncan to take it to you. He is a new member of the family and I am sure you will like him when you meet him. He has come all the way from England to see

me. Chhotelal tells me you took away one Karad *chakki* some time ago. If that is so, you don't want another. If you do, let me know. There will be no difficulty about getting money from the Birlas.

BAPU

SHRI GOSHIBEN CAPTAIN
GANDHI SEVA SENA
ADENWALLA BUILDING
NEW QUEEN'S ROAD
BOMBAY

From a copy . Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

373. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

SEGAON,
February 16, 1937

CHI. LILA,

I got your letter. After you have become used to writing with a reed pen you wouldn't like the steel nib. The latter became popular merely because of people's laziness, for it does not need to be mended whereas the reed pen frequently does. Besides, the steel nib probably seems cheaper, though a reed pen must prove cheaper if used carefully. Moreover, mending a reed pen is an art by itself; and a steel nib can never write as beautifully as a reed pen. It is difficult to write Indian scripts with the steel nib, which is made for the Western scripts. Of course I do not mean to say that steel nibs that can write the Indian scripts cannot be made. So much for the steel-nib philosophy!

Mahabaleshwar is certainly better than Matheran. But perhaps it may be too cold for Dwarkadas[1]. If he can go to Mahabaleshwar, then why shouldn't he go to Panchgani? If Panchgani is convenient to him, it may suit him better. Deolali and Lonavla are also not bad.

If you don't observe restraint in eating, your health is bound to suffer.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9357. Also C.W. 6632. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

[1] Addressee's brother

374. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

February 16, 1937

CHI. NARAHARI,

I got your letter. Is the enclosed summary based on your letter all right? Would you like to add anything? Revise the summary and send it back.

I am enclosing another letter also. The writer's full name is Nanubhai Desai. He had given his address in his previous letter. He has forgotten to give it in this. Nanavati knows him. He has given the address of Ramanlal Engineer who stays near Ellis Bridge. Puratan would probably know him since he is working among the Harijans. Ask him. My purpose in sending his letter to you is this: I have advised him to get married. He says he is ready to marry even a Harijan girl. Perhaps he may be a suitable match for Dudhabhai's Mani. Please inquire about it. That is, call him to you and have a talk with him. Ask him about his family. And if you find everything all right, do what may be necessary. Write to Nanubhai and tell him that because he didn't give his address in his second letter I couldn't write to him direct. I was going to advise him to go to you in any case. Write to him or tell him that I had torn up his previous letter after replying to it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9106

375. LETTER TO SURENDRA

February 16, 1937

CHI. SURENDRA,

When I said '*yatra*' I meant a pilgrimage. Otherwise I would have used the word '*musafari*'[1]. We are trying to include in the morning prayer, not the whole Upanishad, but certainly the first verse. *Tena tyaktena*[2] is more pregnant with meaning. "Left over from *yajna*"[3] can be derived from it. *Tena tyaktena* can bear two meanings: one, that which is given by God, and two, that one must renounce everything. But when one has renounced everything, what is left over? However, life must go on and so we have "*bhunjitha*"[4]. That is to say that one must partake, like a medicine, of what God has given. And this applies not only to the food that we must eat but to all the needs of body, mind and soul that we must satisfy.

From a copy of the Gujarati. Pyarelal Papers Courtesy. Pyarelal

376. LETTER TO BALWANTRAI K. THAKORE

February 16, 1937

BHAISHRI BALWANTRAI,

I received your letter as well as the poem. Perhaps you do not know that my understanding of modern poetry is very limited. So I cannot easily understand the kind of poems you write. That you went over it again and meticulously rectified the mistakes shows your love for me. But on whom do you shower such love? Of what value is music to a deaf man? I will try to read the poem once again with the help of your notes and try to understand it.

The other thing is certainly my subject. The verses quoted by Shri Wadia are not appropriate. What he wants is impossible. You did not see this. And the only meaning which

[1] Travelling

[2] "By that renounced"; *Ishopanishad*, 1

[3] *Bhagavad Gita*, III. 13

[4] "Thou shouldst enjoy."

can be deduced from what you quote is that truth should not be told in a pleasant manner. It may not be a violation of truth to call the father the husband of the mother. But it is certainly a violation of social usage. Accordingly the truth spoken in this way cannot be called truth. One would cease to speak the truth if one stretched the meaning in this way.

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati. Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy Pyarelal

377. LETTER TO BALWANTSINHA

February 16, 1937

CHI. BALWANTSINHA,

Yesterday I laughed at your letter but I could not forget it and now it hurts. I had never thought you capable of such fury. I sent a message through Jhaverbhai. You will have acted upon it. Chanchalbehn will be cooking for you; you will accept it with humility.

Do what the doctor says and get well soon. You may do what you like after you are well. I am beginning to feel that anger is the cause of your weakness. Anger burns none except the person who succumbs to it. In one moment you have harmed yourself by listening to the words of a worthless child. You have also harmed Prabhu Dayal by taking his words literally.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1894

378. LETTER TO DILKHUSH B. DIWANJI

SEGAON,
February 17, 1937

BHAI DILKHUSH,

I am happy to have your letter. You should certainly make an effort. Better still, write a small book. If you want you can consult me. I will certainly give you guidance. You may make some alterations in my questions. I put down the questions as they occurred to me. So there is scope for amplifying them and arranging them more systematically. Maybe you

will like to leave out carpentry and weaving sections for the time being. Proceed as follows: history of cotton, varieties of cotton, how to recognize them, when and how to collect them, shelling of the pods, uses of the shells, ginning-wheel, description of its parts, methods of ginning. Similarly about carding, sliver-making and spinning. If you follow this order the work will be easy. If you have written anything as a specimen, send it to me. I will go through it. I will make suggestions if they are called for. Do not write anything unless you can do so from personal experience. I have seen some books written without personal experience and I have found that they are not at all useful. So make use of whatever you read only after testing it in practice. This however applies only to the actual working. There are certain things which we cannot learn by experience. In such cases our duty is to find out how reliable the writer is. It is good there are so few writers on the subject, so there is not much choice.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Motana Man, p. 72

379. LETTER TO SOHANLAL OBEROI[1]

February 17, 1937

BHAI SOHANLAL,

Telling lies is not less of a sin than lechery. But one who is a libertine in secret is guilty of three sins: he falls himself, he brings about another's fall, and he also lies.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6864

[1] A khadi worker of the Punjab

380. LETTER TO MARIE ROMAIN ROLLAND

SEGAON, WARDHA,
February 18, 1937

DEAR SISTER,

My son sent me your letter to him in which you have asked for my autograph for the purpose of selling it in aid of the stricken women and children of Spain. While that unhappy people has my whole-hearted sympathy I am not sending you my autograph. I am not convinced of the right of employing such means for obtaining money for a good cause. People should subscribe willingly for such without expecting any return.

My affection to you both.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: C.W. 10587. Courtesy: Madeleine Rolland

381. LETTER TO SHIVPRASAD GUPTA

February 18, 1937

I am an idealist. I am also a practical man. I have no enmity toward foreign countries but I cannot harm my country for their sake. I first began using Indian dates in South Africa and kept up the practice on my return to India. But I found that the preference was meaningless. And what a number of calendars we have! One in Bengal, three in Maharashtra, your own yet another, one in Bihar, one observed by the Arya Samaj, Hijri for the Mussalmans. I should have so many *panchangs*[1] with me; only then can I possibly be impartial towards the people of other provinces. Alongside I have to take note of the Western calendar. Under the circumstances I gave up the use of the Indian calendar and it has resulted in no harm to anyone; in fact I have only benefited. I have no resentment towards protagonists like you of the solar calendar though not to be resentful is indeed difficult. If I resent your partiality I should return your letter and supplement the date *Magh* 24 with the Christian year. Love holds me back from such impertinence. The

[1] Almanacs

Gregorian calendar is not solely English, it is used far and wide in the West. We do adopt many things Western, many of them are harmful while some are beneficial. As for the Gregorian calendar, if it is not of benefit, it is not harmful either.

Now for the second question. You believe in *Ekantvad* while I believe in *Anekantvad.* If I am granted Dominion Status along with the right to secede from the Empire whenever I choose to do so, then the heart of an *Ekantvadi* like yourself will certainly undergo a change. But the day when we shall be thus blessed is in the distant future. For the present we are only the sufferers. But take it that as soon as India gets Dominion Status the word *Ramarajya* will go. When the authority comes to be vested in Indians the occasion will spark off internecine strife. You will want the capital in Kashi while I shall favour Segaon. But the day is far too distant, why need we quarrel about it now?

Disregard my views and improve your health with the help of *asanas* and concentration upon Ramanama. Rest assured that the sacrifices made by Indians will not go in vain because of my shortcomings; neither will your imprisonment prove fruitless.

[From Hindi]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy. Narayan Desai

382. LETTER TO HANUMAN PRASAD PODDAR

February 18, 1937

Your letter is a sign of your love. As for death, it is a companion of birth and a very faithful one. It never fails. Why should one worship God only when nearing death? What I regard as worship goes on every moment.

The best worship of God is to serve God's creation in a spirit of devotion to Him. Today it has to be tuned to *tena tyaktena bhunjitha.*

Why do you wish that your dream may prove false?[1] Even if I live to be a hundred it will seem too short to my friends. Then what does today or tomorrow matter? And as for worship, let us ever be doing it, both the young like you and the old like me.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Hindi]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] The addressee had dreamt that Gandhiji had not long to live and that he should be told to spend the remaining days in the worship of God.

383. LETTER TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

SEGAON, WARDHA,
February 19, 1937

DEAR GURUDEV,

I got your letter of the 10th instant five days ago. Your trust in me and affection for me are there to be seen in every line but what about my amazing limitations? My shoulders are too weak to bear the burden you wish to impose upon me. My regard to you pulls me in one direction, my reason in the opposite, and it would be folly on my part to surrender reason to emotion in a question like the one that faces me. I know that if I undertake the trust I would not need to go into details of administration but it does imply capacity for financing the Institution[1] and what I heard two days ago has deepened my reluctance for I understand that in spite of your promise[2] to me in Delhi you are about to go to Ahmedabad on a begging expedition. I was grieved and I would ask you on bended knees to forgo the expedition if it is really decided upon. And in any case I would beg of you to recall my appointment as one of the Trustees.[3]

With love and reverence,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 4646

384. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

February 19, 1937

CHI. MAHADEV,

You surely know that I did not refuse merely out of courtesy. Hence it is altogether wrong for you to take the blame on yourself. It was but proper for you at that time not to press me. I enjoyed myself thoroughly that night. I did not get nervous

[1] Visvabharati

[2] *Vide* Vol. LXII, p. 290.

[3] *Vide* also "Letter to Rabindranath Tagore", pp. 410-1.

when I discovered that I had lost the way. I realized the error in just five minutes. There was a sudden change in the landscape and so I stopped the car and got down. I looked around me on all sides and enjoyed the pleasure of solitude that chance had given me. Looking round, I observed the changed position of the stars and retraced my way. I hardly took ten minutes to find the point where I had taken the wrong turn.

From a photostat of the Gujarati. S.N. 11518

385. LETTER TO CHITRE

February 19, 1937

CHI. CHITRE,

You will get much peace of mind if you concentrate on the last lines of the *mantra*. You should be satisfied with what God gives you. Do not forsake what he has given you. Do not envy others what they have or do not have. That is the meaning of the last line. Wealth does not mean money and riches. One man's wealth is scholarship, another's is physical health while that of a third is sacrifice. Do not feel envious of all these things. That is to say, you should not feel disturbed by others' intelligence, efficiency, sacrifice, etc. You should never think about it. We should sacrifice what we can without any difficulty and feel happy about it. But you are doing just the opposite. You are angry because others are not doing anything.

You go on asking yourself—why isn't the Travancore Maharaja a great saint? Why isn't an immoral person pure? Why do the zamindars not become sensible? Why do the poor not occupy palaces? To think in this manner is contrary to the *mantra*. The popular meaning of the *mantra* is: Let the world do what it wants. Watch it. Whatever you do, do it in the name of God and only as much as He allows you to do. Take as much as He allows you to take and be happy.

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

386. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

February 19, 1937

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

If you are prepared even in July, write to me. I shall certainly do what I can then.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4280

387. SO-CALLED INCONSISTENCIES

I have some very persistent correspondents who put posers before me. Here is a specimen letter from one such correspondent:

> Whenever economic troubles arise and whenever questions have been put to you on the economic relations of capital and labour, you have put forth the theory of trusteeship which has always puzzled me. You want the rich to hold all their property in trust for the poor and expend it for their benefit. If I ask you whether this is possible, you will tell me that my question arises from a belief in the essential selfishness of human nature and that your theory is based on the essential goodness of human nature. However, in the political sphere, you do not hold such views without at the same time losing your faith in the fundamental goodness of human nature. The British claim the same trusteeship for their domination of India. But you have lost faith in the British Empire long ago, and today there is no greater enemy to it than you. Is it consistent to have one law for the political world and another for the economic world? Or, do you mean to say that you have not lost faith in capitalism and capitalists just as you have lost faith in British Imperialism and the British? For your trusteeship theory sounds very much like the Divine Right theory of kings which has been exploded long ago. When one man, who was allowed to hold political power in trust for all the others and who derived it from them, misused it, people revolted against it and democracy was born. Similarly now, when a few, who ought to hold the economic power in

trust for the others from whom they derive it, use it for their own self-aggrandisement and to the detriment of the rest, the inevitable result is the deprivation of the few of the means of economic power by the many, i.e., the birth of socialism.

Hitherto violence was the only recognized means to attain anything good or bad When violence is employed even with a view to achieve good, it brings evil in its train and compromises the good achieved. Now I take it that your definite contribution to the world lies in your having successfully demonstrated the efficacy of another means, namely, non-violence, which is superior to violence and does not poison human relations. Therefore my fondest hope is that you should fight and end the present economic order non-violently and help to create a new one.

Secondly, you may answer another question agitating my mind. In 1930 when you launched your Satyagraha campaign, you declared that the fight was a fight to the finish and you would either return victorious or your dead body would float on the waters of the sea Even in your subsequent statements you emphasized this and called upon all Indians to fight determinedly Now, though you have reserved the right to civil disobedience to yourself, you have abandoned the fight against the Government At the present moment you are devoting yourself heart and soul to the infusing of life into and raising the standard of the Indian village I do not know whether you consider this phase of your activity as fight against the Government. The A. I. V. I. A. is divorced from all politics, and therefore your activity in the promotion of the objects of the A. I. V I. A. cannot be called a part of the political fight to win political freedom for our country. Or do you think there can be gaps, intervening periods of lull in a fight called a fight to the finish? If so, why did you differentiate the fight of 1930 from that of 1920 and call the former a fight to the finish?

To take the first part, I see no inconsistency in my treatment of capitalism or imperialism. My correspondent has been led into a confusion of thought. I have not talked or thought of what kings, imperialists or capitalists claim and have claimed. I have talked and written of how capital may be treated. And then it is one thing to make a claim and another to live up to it. Not everyone like me (say) who claims to be a servant of the people becomes that by the mere assertion. And yet all would appreciate persons like me if we were found to be living up to our claim. Similarly would all rejoice if a capitalist were to divest himself of exclusive ownership and declare himself to be in possession as a trustee for the people. It is highly

probable that my advice will not be accepted and my dream will not be realized. But who can guarantee that the socialists' dream will be realized? Socialism was not born with the discovery of the misuse of capital by capitalists. As I have contended, socialism, even communism, is explicit in the first verse of *Ishopanishad.* What is true is that when some reformers lost faith in the method of conversion, the technique of what is known as scientific socialism was born. I am engaged in solving the same problem that faces scientific socialists. It is true, however, that my approach is always and only through unadulterated non-violence. It may fail. If it does, it will be because of my ignorance of the technique of non-violence. I may be a bad exponent of the doctrine in which my faith is daily increasing. The A. I. S. A. and the A. I. V. I. A. are organizations through which the technique of non-violence is being tested on an all-India scale. They are special autonomous bodies created by the Congress for the purpose of enabling me to conduct my experiments without being fettered by the vicissitudes of policy to which a wholly democratic body like the Congress is always liable. Trusteeship, as I conceive it, has yet to prove its worth. It is an attempt to secure the best use of property for the people by competent hands.

Now for the second part of the letter. I do not divide life into watertight compartments. The life of a nation like that of individuals is an indivisible whole. My retirement from the Congress or political life so called does not mean the slightest diminution in my yearning for India's complete independence; nor is civil disobedience any distinct process of non-violence. It is one of the many non-violent processes which are in no way inconsistent with one another. What I have to do is to give a clear demonstration of non-violence in all my actions. I claim to be conducting my experiment in a scientific spirit. In the garden of non-violence are many plants. They are all from the same parent They may not be all used simultaneously. Some are less powerful than others. All are harmless. But they have to be handled skilfully. I am applying such skill to their use as God has given me. But because I use one plant rather than another at any time, it does not follow that I give up the fight. It is a fight to the finish. Defeat has no place in the dictionary of non-violence.

Harijan, 20-2-1937

388. AND THOU TOO!

An advocate from Tamil Nad writes:[1]

> I write this letter to you since we want you to advise us on a problem which vitally affects us and which is in all respects like the Harijan problem—the problem of pollution
>
> The Bar Association of this place is nearly 100 strong All members of the Association are Brahmins except for three, of whom one is a Christian The members pay a monthly subscription and the Association is maintained from the subscriptions. The Association maintains a water pot for drinking purposes which is kept in a room On account of this there was an uproar in the Association and the Brahmin members objected to our taking water from the pot kept in the room on the sentimental ground of pollution
>
> I am writing this to you so that you can give us the lead and valuable advice for us to follow, lest we should err . . .

This is an old letter. Probably the Bar Association referred to by my correspondent has settled the differences in an honourable manner. But I know the evil persists in many places. What is true of bar associations is equally true of schools and colleges. I have no manner of doubt that the setting up of such a bar in public schools and associations is a usurpation wholly indefensible, and I should be surprised if it is not also illegal. Those who have prejudices such as the correspondent describes. may make their own individual arrangements but cannot deprive fellow members and fellow-students of the right of using common property in a manner common to all.

Harijan, 20-2-1937

[1] Only extracts are reproduced here.

389. OUR VILLAGES

A young man who is trying to live in a village and earn his livelihood has sent me a pathetic letter. He does not know much English. I am therefore giving the letter below in an abridged form:

> Three years ago when I was 20 years old I came to this village after spending 15 years in a town My domestic circumstances did not allow me to have college education The work you have taken up for village revival has encouraged me to pursue village life. I have some land My village has a population of nearly 2,500. After close contact with this village I find the following among more than three-fourths of the people·
>
> (1) Party feelings and quarrels,
> (2) Jealousy,
> (3) Illiteracy,
> (4) Wickedness,
> (5) Disunion,
> (6) Carelessness,
> (7) Lack of manners,
> (8) Adherence to the old meaningless customs,
> (9) Cruelty.
>
> This is an out-of-the-way place No great man has ever visited such remote villages. The company of great ones is essential for advancement So I am afraid to live in this village Shall I leave this village? If not, what guidance will you give me?

Though no doubt there is exaggeration in the picture drawn by the young correspondent, his statement may be generally accepted. The reason for the tragic state is not far to seek. Villages have suffered long from neglect by those who have had the benefit of education. They have chosen the city life. The village movement is an attempt to establish healthy contact with the villages by inducing those who are fired with the spirit of service to settle in them and find self-expression in the service of villagers. The defects noticed by the correspondent are not inherent in village life. Those who have settled in villages in the spirit of service are not dismayed by the difficulties facing them. They knew before they went that they would have to contend against many difficulties including even

sullenness on the part of villagers Only those, therefore, who have faith in themselves and in their mission will serve the villagers and influence their lives. A true life lived amongst the people is in itself an object-lesson that must produce its own effect upon immediate surroundings. The difficulty with the young man is, perhaps, that he has gone to the village merely to earn a living without the spirit of service behind it. I admit that village life does not offer attractions to those who go there in search of money. Without the incentive of service village life would jar after the novelty has worn out. No young man having gone to a village may abandon the pursuit on the slightest contact with difficulty. Patient effort will show that villagers are not very different from city-dwellers and that they will respond to kindliness and attention. It is no doubt true that one does not have in the villages the opportunity of contact with the great ones of the land. With the growth of village mentality the leaders will find it necessary to tour in the villages and establish a living touch with them. Moreover, the companionship of the great and the good is available to all through the works of saints like Chaitanya, Ramakrishna, Tulsidas, Kabir, Nanak, Dadu, Tukaram, Tiruvalluvar, and others too numerous to mention though equally known and pious. The difficulty is to get the mind tuned to the reception of permanent values. If it is modern thought—political, social, economical, scientific—that is meant, it is possible to procure literature that will satisfy curiosity. I admit, however, that one does not find such as easily as one finds religious literature. Saints wrote and spoke for the masses: The vogue for translating modern thought to the masses in an acceptable manner has not yet quite set in. But it must come in time I would, therefore, advise young men like my correspondent not to give in but persist in their effort and by their presence make the villages more livable and lovable. That they will do by serving the villages in a manner acceptable to the villagers. Everyone can make the beginning by making the villages cleaner by their own labour and removing illiteracy to the extent of their abiliy. And if their lives are clean, methodical and industrious, there is no doubt that the infection will spread in the villages in which they may be working.

Harijan, 20-2-1937

390. *DUTY OF A HARIJAN SEVAK*[1]

A Harijan Sevak writes:[2]

It is not impossible to say when the reformers irritate people and when they dispel their misapprehension. By a single act or word alone it is possible to cause irritation as well as to dispel misapprehension. It should be left to each individual to make his own decision regarding this. This much can be said with certainty, that we should do nothing with a view to irritating anyone; and at the same time we must certainly endeavour to dispel any misapprehension. When the work of reform has become a second nature with one, the question of wanting to irritate anyone does not arise. For who can give up his own nature? And when action or word becomes natural no one will feel irritated by it. Therefore, the proper thing would be for the reformer to pursue his duty as duty, and not with any other motive. By doing so, misapprehension will be dispelled automatically.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 20-2-1937

391. *HARIJANS AND OTHERS*

A correspondent writes:[3]

It certainly is necessary. If in all Harijan schools the caste-Hindu boys are admitted in large numbers there is certainly a danger of Harijan boys being deprived of education. Therefore some fees must be collected from every caste-Hindu boy. It is possible that caste-Hindu boys are also poor like Harijan boys. If that is the case, then the Bihar Harijan Sevak Sangh should

[1] This appeared under "Notes"

[2] The letter is not translated here The correspondent had said that while reformers readily accepted food and drink from Harijans in public they did not do so in their homes for fear that doing so might irritate people.

[3] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had complained that in Bihar a certain Harijan school had more non-Harijan boys than Harijan boys because the school charged no fee. The policy of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, he had pointed out, was to charge fees from non-Harijan boys and had asked if it was necessary further to clarify the point.

hold consultations with the Bihar Vidyapith and ask the Vidyapith to bear the expense of all the caste-Hindu boys attending the schools. The Vidyapith's field is unrestricted whereas the Harijan Sevak Sangh's is restricted and it should be so. Therefore it would be wrong for the Harijan Sevak Sangh to impart free education to caste-Hindu boys, while in the case of the Vidyapith it may be a duty.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 20-2-1937

392. LETTER TO K. B. JOSHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
February 20, 1937

MY DEAR JOSHI,

Having read the correspondence between you and Mahadev Desai I took charge of it myself—hence the delay in acknowledging your letter. I see that you are labouring under a sense of injustice and irritation. Let me give you my assurance that no one has the slightest intention of giving you any cause for offence. Jajuji and Kumarappa have appreciated your co-operation and the benefit you have given the A. I. V. I. A. of your expert knowledge and guidance. Of course I know that you undertook to come and organize the paper department at my instance and request. I know your worth and I do not want to lose your services so patriotically given. I know, too, that in our country we have very few experts. Of these those who will give their free service for the benefit of the villagers can be counted on one's finger-tips and you are one of them. It will not do for you, therefore, to be offended. Do please, therefore, come as soon as you can spare the time and I will personally see to it that every cause of offence is removed. With your assistance I want the paper department to be put in a first-class condition. I know that this is not so at present.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

I like the specimen of the sugar you have made from date palm and I want your [help] in developing this village industry also .

From a photostat: G.N. 2762

393. LETTER TO BALWANTSINHA

[February 20, 1937][1]

CHI. BALWANTSINHA,

Your letters keep coming. Poor Lakha[2] is disconsolate while waiting for you. Still you must remain there till the doctor discharges you. We shall manage somehow or other. The construction work on Mirabehn's hut has been started.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1890

394. LETTER TO BALWANTSINHA

February 20, 1937

CHI. BALWANTSINHA,

I sent a few lines in the morning. I could have written more had I detained Kumarappa's car which did not seem proper and writing with the left hand is an extremely slow business.

Impatience will only delay the cure, it is possible only through patience. The civil surgeon says that impurity in your blood is not recent but of a long standing, which makes treatment prolonged. What are you doing there? How do you pass your time and what is the diet? A cheerful spirit is a great contributing factor towards recovery. A student of the *Gita* should be content whatever be his lot. This is said in Chapter XII.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G N. 1895

[1] The date has been supplied by the addressee.
[2] A calf

395. LETTER TO BALWANTSINHA

February 20, 1937

CHI. BALWANTSINHA,

Have patience, I shall write to the surgeon.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi G N 1868

396. MY NOTES

INNOCENT HUMOUR

Last year, Shri Kishorelal Mashruwala had gone on a tour of Bihar on behalf of the Gandhi Seva Sangh He had also visited the Santhal Paragana. Generally the people there are very poor. It can be said that they are largely untouched by modern civilization. During his tour of the Paragana Kishorelal happened to go to a village. The headman of the village, although illiterate, knew his work well. Shri Kishorelal writes about him as follows:

> Though he is illiterate, he told me his tale in a very touching manner. It did not appear that he was repeating someone else's words. I found in this headman the naive humour which is characteristic of villagers. He said: "We have only one difficulty. when there is famine in our parts, the crops die, the cattle die, human beings die, well-water dies but revenue and interest—these two never die This is our only sorrow"

Man cannot survive without humour. Moreover, people in the villages do not have the means to kill time which city-dwellers have. I do not believe that these are necessary. Wherever things are well-planned, there is no need to kill time. Man hardly has time enough to spare. He has sufficient time just to carry out his duties. Instead, we waste a great deal of time and, as a result, suffer starvation. Human beings do not get worn out through work. It is by working that man remains fresh and makes

progress in every direction. He gets worn out through worry, by doing that which should not be done and by wasting time. That headman was capable of laughing despite bitter experiences because he would not have been idle in his own work. His humour may be taken as a sign of the joy he could feel in the midst of difficulties.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN CLOTH

In the very same letter, Shri Kishorelal writes as follows about other Santhals:[1]

What has been made possible with these simple Santhals should be possible at any place if the effort is made. Despite this, self-sufficiency in cloth has made little progress in our society. It is the task of the khadi worker to find out its causes. How could self-sufficiency be attained in the above mentioned village? Was it there even before khadi activity started? Was it done through the inspiration of some workers? How much khadi do they use? What is the count of the khadi which they make? What is their speed in spinning and carding? What are their tools like and what other activities do they pursue? Answers to these and similar questions should be obtained with regard to this village. If we have this information we shall know why self-sufficiency has not been achieved elsewhere. Whatever the conditions in this village may be, it is my confirmed belief that we can certainly succeed in such work if we can produce experts in the science of khadi for there is no flaw to be seen in the idea of self-sufficiency. And it is a historical fact that at one time India was self-sufficient in cloth.

[From Gujarâti]

Harijanbandhu, 21-2-1937

[1] The letter is not translated here. Mashruwala had stated that the Manjhi Santhals of Hazaribagh district were the only industrious people he found in Bihar. They were truly self-sufficient in the matter of clothing.

397. LETTER TO BALWANTSINHA

February 21, 1937

CHI. BALWANTSINHA,

Your letter.

Although I do not see any reason why honey or dates should cause boils you may consult the doctor. The reasons were the lack or insufficiency of milk and green vegetables, excess of wheat and, above all, your fiery temper.

Knowledge of English is not required of village workers though knowledge of any language is of course good; but I do not think this was the idea behind your question.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi. G.N. 1896

398. LETTER TO BALWANTSINHA

SEGAON,
February 22, 1937

CHI. BALWANTSINHA,

Another cow is certainly needed provided it is a good one. The doctor says that you should be cured soon.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi G.N. 1897

399. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

SEGAON,
February 23, 1937

CHI. KAKA,

I am sending a letter with this. Get in touch with the writer. He is so careless that he does not even give his address.

But the man is good, good at his work and wholly engrossed in it. You can address your letter to him at Reverend Lodge, Nelson Square, Nagpur. If you can borrow from someone a small text-book of geography, one of history, a map, a text-book of geometry and one Sanskrit teacher either in Marathi or Hindi, please send them to me. I want them as help for teaching Kanu.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N. 10897

400. LETTER TO TARABEHN N. MASHRUWALA

February 23, 1937

CHI. TARI,

I got your letter after many days. I was pleased. I am glad that you have gone to take a vaid's treatment. I want your body to get strong somehow. I find it simply intolerable that you should be so unsteady in mind and practically useless for anything I am hoping to take much work from you. Fulfil that hope of mine. I give rest to my right hand on days other than Mondays, and dictate most of the Gujarati letters to Manu or Vijaya.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N. 6700. Also C W. 4345 Courtesy: Kanubhai N. Mashruwala

401. LETTER TO BALWANTSINHA

February 23, 1937

CHI. BALWANTSINHA,

You must have got my letter of yesterday and your fever must have abated by now. No need to get panicky. Patience will make everything come right. Yes, the *bhajan*[1] is certainly

[1] A Hindi *bhajan* starting with "Whosoever is so fortunate as to meet Rama"

worth pondering over. A mosquito-net should be used if the mosquitoes are proving bothersome.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi. G N 1898

402. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

February 24, 1937

MY DEAR ANAND,

The hardness of my heart is only apparent. I would not apply hair oil to a wound from which Kanu was suffering He howled. I was unbending. I was cruel, the boy [had] enough! But in truth I was kind. What is the use of my calling you here without cause? Your agony is mental. Brothers and sisters often live apart and are happy. Husband and wife do likewise when a joint life becomes an impossibility. Even Vidya's illness is no cause for grief. You must therefore learn to be brave and cheerful in the face of domestic or other affliction. I do hope Vidya will become well. A cooler climate after April will no doubt be necessary.

I hope this pencil hand will be readable.

Love to you both

BAPU

From a microfilm. Courtesy National Archives of India and Anand T. Hingorani

403 LETTER TO VIDYA A. HINGORANI

SEGAON,
February 24, 1937

CHI. VIDYA,

Do not give way to despair because of your illness. Illness is sent only to test us. You have to be patient. God will help you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Hindi. Courtesy: National Archives of India and Anand T. Hingorani

404. INTERVIEW TO DR. CRANE[1]

[*February 25, 1937*][2]

GANDHIJI: I shall certainly give you my reaction to Christianity. Even when I was 18 I came in touch with good Christians in London. Before that I had come in touch with what I used then to call 'beef and beer-bottle Christianity', for these were regarded as the indispensable criteria of a man becoming a Christian, with also a third thing, namely, adoption of a European style of dress. Those Christians were parodying St. Paul's teaching—'Call thou nothing unclean.' I went to London, therefore, with that prejudice against Christianity. I came across good Christians there who placed the Bible in my hands. Then I met numerous Christians in South Africa, and I have since grown to this belief that Christianity is as good and as true a religion as my own. For a time I struggled with the question, 'which was the true religion out of those I know?' But ultimately I came to the deliberate conviction that there was no such thing as only one true religion, every other being false. There is no religion that is absolutely perfect. All are equally imperfect or more or less perfect, hence the conclusion that Christianity is as good and true as my own religion. But so also about Islam or Zoroastrianism or Judaism.

I therefore do not take as literally true the text[3] that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. God cannot be the exclusive father and I cannot ascribe exclusive divinity to Jesus. He is as divine as Krishna or Rama or Mahomed or Zoroaster. Similarly I do not regard every word of the Bible as the inspired word of God even as I do not regard every word of the Vedas or the Koran as inspired. The sum total of each of these books is certainly inspired, but I miss that inspiration in many of the things taken individually. The Bible is as much a book of religion with me as the *Gita* and the Koran.

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter". Dr Crane was a clergyman from America, who had given up active service in the midst of World War I in disgust for its violence He wanted to know Gandhiji's attitude towards Christianity and also religion in general.

[2] From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary

[3] *St John*, III 16

Therefore I am not interested in weaning you from Christianity and making you a Hindu, and I would not relish your designs upon me, if you had any, to convert me to Christianity! I would also dispute your claim that Christianity is the only true religion. It is also a true religion, a noble religion, and along with other religions it has contributed to raise the moral height of mankind. But it has yet to make a greater contribution. After all what are 2,000 years in the life of a religion? Just now Christianity comes to yearning mankind in a tainted form. Fancy Bishops supporting slaughter in the name of Christianity.

DR CRANE. But, when you say that all religions are true, what do you do when there are conflicting counsels?

G. I have no difficulty in hitting upon the truth, because I go by certain fundamental maxims. Truth is superior to everything and I reject what conflicts with it. Similarly that which is in conflict with non-violence should be rejected. And on matters which can be reasoned out, that which conflicts with Reason must also be rejected.

DR C In matters which can be reasoned out?

G. Yes, there are subjects where Reason cannot take us far and we have to accept things on faith. Faith then does not contradict Reason but transcends it. Faith is a kind of sixth sense which works in cases which are without the purview of Reason. Well then, given these three criteria, I can have no difficulty in examining all claims made on behalf of religion. Thus to believe that Jesus is the only begotten son of God is to me against Reason, for God can't marry and beget children. The word 'son' there can only be used in a figurative sense. In that sense everyone who stands in the position of Jesus is a begotten son of God. If a man is spiritually miles ahead of us we may say that he is in a special sense the son of God, though we are all children of God. We repudiate the relationship in our lives, whereas his life is a witness to that relationship.

DR C Then you will recognize degrees of divinity Would you not say that Jesus was the most divine?

G. No, for the simple reason that we have no data. Historically we have more data about Mahomed than anyone else because he was more recent in time. For Jesus there are less data, and still less for Buddha, Rama and Krishna; and when we know so little about them, is it not preposterous to say that one of

them was more divine than another? In fact even if there were a great deal of data available, no judge should shoulder the burden of sifting all the evidence, if only for the reason that it requires a highly spiritual person to guage the degree of divinity of the subjects he examines. To say that Jesus was 99 per cent divine, and Mahomed 50 per cent, and Krishna 10 per cent, is to arrogate to oneself a function which really does not belong to man.

DR C But, let us take a debatable point. Supposing I was debating between whether violence is justified or not. Mahomedanism would say one thing, Christianity another

G. Then I must decide with the help of the tests I have suggested.

DR. C But does not Mahomed prescribe the use of the sword in certain circumstances?

G. I suppose most Muslims will agree. But I read religion in a different way. Khan Saheb Abdul Ghaffar Khan derives his belief in non-violence from the Koran, and the Bishop of London derives his belief in violence from the Bible. I derive my belief in non-violence from the *Gita*, whereas there are others who read violence in it. But if the worst came to the worst and if I came to the conclusion that the Koran teaches violence, I would still reject violence, but I would not therefore say that the Bible is superior to the Koran or that Mahomed is inferior to Jesus. It is not my function to judge Mahomed and Jesus. It is enough that my non-violence is independent of the sanction of scriptures. But the fact remains that religious books have a hold upon mankind which other books have not. They have made a greater impresssion on me than Mark Twain or, to take a more appropriate instance, Emerson. Emerson was a thinker. Jesus and Mahomed were through and through men of action in a sense Emerson would never be. Their power was derived from their faith in God.

DR. C. I will take a concrete instance now to show what I mean I was terribly shocked on Monday. I counted 37 cows slain on the streets by Muslims in the name of religion, and in offence to the Hindu sentiment I asked the Hindu friend who travelled with me why the Muslims did so. He said it was part of their religion. 'Is it part of their spiritual growth?' I asked him. He said it was. I met a Mussalman who said, 'We both please God and ourselves' Now here was a Mussalman revelling in a thing that outrages you and me too. Do you think all this is counter to the Koran?

G. I do indeed.[1] Just as many Hindu practices, e.g., untouchability—are no part of Hindu religion, I say that cow-slaughter is no part of Islam. But I do not wrestle with the Muslims who believe that it is part of Islam.

DR. C. What do you say to the attempts to convert?

G. I strongly resent these overtures to utterly ignorant men. I can perhaps understand overtures made to me, as indeed they are being made. For they can reason with me and I can reason with them. But I certainly resent the overtures made to Harijans. When a Christian preacher goes and says to a Harijan that Jesus was the only begotten son of God, he will give him a blank stare. Then he holds out all kinds of inducements which debase Christianity.

DR. C. Would you say a Harijan is not capable of reason?

G. He is. For instance, if you try to take work out of him without payment, he will not give it. He also has a sense of ethical values. But when you ask him to understand theological beliefs and categories he will not understand anything. I could not do so even when I was 17 and had a fair share of education and training. The orthodox Hindus have so horribly neglected the Harijan that it is astonishing how he adheres to the Hindu faith. Now I say it is outrageous for others to shake his faith.

DR. C. What about a man who says he is commanded by God to do violence?

G. There you would not put another God before him. You need not disturb his religion, but you will disturb his reason.

DR. C. But take Hitler. He says he is carrying out God's behest in persecuting the Jews and killing his opponents.

G. You will not pit one word of God against another word of God. But you will have to bear down his reason. For him you will have to produce a miracle which you will do when Christians will learn the art of dying without killing in defence of what they hold dearer than religion. But we can go on arguing like this endlessly. And then I may tell you that you are talking against time.

And with this Gandhiji looked at the watch.

[1] Here Gandhiji referred the interviewer to the article "Need for Tolerance", pp. 330-2.

DR C Just one question, then Would you say then that your religion is a synthesis of all religions?

G. Yes, if you will But I would call that synthesis Hinduism, and for you the synthesis will be Christianity. If I did not do so, you would always be patronizing me, as many Christians do now, saying, 'How nice it would be if Gandhi accepted Christianity,' and Muslims would be doing the same, saying, 'How nice it would be if Gandhi accepted Islam!'. That immediately puts a barrier between you and me. Do you see that?

DR C I do Just one last question In your Hinduism do you basically include the caste system?

G. I do not. Hinduism does not believe in caste. I would obliterate it at once. But I believe in varnadharma, which is the law of life. I believe that some people are born to teach and some to defend and some to engage in trade and agriculture and some to do manual labour, so much so that these occupations become hereditary. The law of varna is nothing but the law of conservation of energy. Why should my son not be a scavenger if I am one?

DR C. Indeed? Do you go so far?

G. I do, because I hold a scavenger's profession in no way inferior to a clergyman's.

DR. C. I grant that, but should Lincoln have been a wood-chopper rather than President of the U S A?

G. But why should not a wood-chopper be a President of the United States? Gladstone used to chop wood.

DR. C. But he did not accept it as his calling

G. He would not have been worse off if he had done so. What I mean is, one born a scavenger must earn his livelihood by being a scavenger, and then do whatever else he likes. For a scavenger is as worthy of his hire as a lawyer or your President. That, according to me, is Hinduism. There is no better communism on earth, and I have illustrated it with one verse from the Upanishads which means: God pervades all—animate and inanimate. Therefore renounce all and dedicate it to God and then live. The right of living is thus derived from renunciation. It does not say, 'When all do their part of the work I too will do it.' It says, 'Don't bother about others, do your job first and leave the rest to Him.' Varnadharma acts even as the law of gravitation. I cannot cancel it or its working by trying to jump higher and higher day

by day till gravitation ceases to work. That effort will be vain. So is the effort to jump over one another. The law of varna is the antithesis of competition which kills.

Harijan, 6-3-1937

405. LETTER TO KAMALNAYAN BAJAJ

SEGAON,
February 26, 1937

CHI. KAMALNAYAN,

I got your letter. You are getting more and more involved and here everybody is talking of calling you back soon. Your father-in-law wants it to be early. So does Janakibehn. Father also is practically of the same view. I am neutral, though I don't believe that you will bring home much from there. But I wouldn't approve of calling you back so long as you are eager to continue there If you wish to take up business, you should give up your desire for a degree. What will you do after becoming a barrister? Or a graduate? As I understand you, you wish to earn money. You do not wish to live on Father's money or to become a sannyasi. If I am right, business is the proper field for your endeavour. If you agree with this, give up the desire to be a barrister or to get a degree. Your English must have improved sufficiently by now. If, however, you are keen on a degree and on going to Oxford or Cambridge, you may see Deenbandhu Andrews. Those whom I know at Oxford and Cambridge, I know through him. Please, therefore, see him. He will make the necessary arrangement for you He lives at Cambridge. You know him, of course, but I am writing to him all the same. He will, therefore, remember when you write to him. His address is: Master's Lodge, Pembroke College, Cambridge. Do whatever you do after full deliberation. Keep writing to me. You do seem to be a little lazy about writing.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N 3055

406. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

February 26, 1937

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Your letter. What I meant was that if nothing is settled about you till then, you should do in July whatever you want to do. I shall also help you to the best of my ability. I hardly know anything about Ramana Maharshi. Whatever I know is only at second hand.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G N 4281 Also S.G 57

407. OUR CATTLE WEALTH

This is being written on Bakr-Id day—a day of rejoicing for Mussalmans and grief for Hindus. It is a day of grief for Hindus because their Mussalman brethren slaughter cows for sacrifice though they know that the cow is an object of worship and veneration for Hindus. Though I hold the cow as much in veneration as any Hindu and am responsible for bringing into being the — in my opinion — only scientific society for effectively protecting the cow, I have never sympathized with the Hindu grief and the implied anger against Mussalmans on Bakr-Id. The latter are undoubtedly foolish and obstinate in that they slaughter the cow and needlessly wound Hindu susceptibility. For there is no religious obligation on the part of Mussalmans to kill the cow on Bakr-Id or any other day. I have heard some Mussalmans arguing that Hindus by their worship of the cow make it obligatory on them to kill the cow. This borders on compulsion. But if the Mussalman is foolish and obstinate, the Hindu is criminally ignorant and indirectly becomes party to the slaughter of the cow by the Mussalman. For cows are sold by Hindus as a rule. Hindu grief and anger are uncalled for. Hindu ignorance is responsible for many more deaths of cows than the deaths caused by the Mussalmans' slaughter of the cow for one day in the year. Be it noted that Hindus are apparently quite reconciled to cow-slaughter on days other than Bakr-Id.

I have in my possession startling authentic figures showing the annual slaughter of cattle and deaths from natural causes. According to the livestock census of 1935 about 80 per cent die naturally and 20 per cent are slaughtered. The percentage of natural death, however, varies according to locality. Where grazing conditions are good and cultivation careful, natural deaths fall as low as 7 per cent, and in famine zones they rise to 30 per cent. In the Bombay Presidency (British) it is estimated that there were, in 1935, 74.5 lakhs of cattle. Of these 9 lakhs died naturally against 2 lakhs by slaughter, i.e., 12 per cent against 3 per cent. In 1935 in British India, including Bengal and Bihar and Orissa, there were over eight crores of cows against just under three crores of buffaloes. Comparison between the census of 1935 and 1930 shows that buffalo wealth is on the increase three times that of the cow.

Now it is common knowledge that the cow is generally owned by Hindus. If they removed their unpardonable ignorance, they could easily prevent many deaths from natural causes. I reproduce immediately below this note two extracts[1] showing why so many cattle die annually and what can and should be done to prevent this tremendous waste of wealth. Time was when the number of cows was the measure of a man's wealth. Today the cows are a drag on a man's possessions. It is almost like depreciation of currency. The only difference is that prevention of depreciation of cattle or rather cow currency is possible by internal effort. The effort is threefold:

(1) No waste of energy over persuading Mussalmans to give up cow-slaughter, whether for sacrifice or food. They must be put on their own honour.

(2) Exclusive concentration on improvement of the cow and therefore giving up of buffalo milk and ghee.

(3) Exclusive use of dead cattle hide and free use other than for food of all the parts of carcasses, and improvement in tanning.

The material for improvement is ready at hand in the numerous pinjrapoles and goshalas covering the whole land. The only thing needful is to remove certain prejudices and to conduct these institutions on sound scientific lines.

Harijan, 27-2-1937

[1] These are not reproduced here

408. VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE VICES

A khadi-worker writes:[1]

It is a good question. There should be no comparison of vices. As for me, I look upon untruth as the root cause of all sins. No institution which tolerates untruth can serve the community or survive for long. But when a man resorts to untruthfulness, it assumes various forms. It is a kind of immorality. Untruth rarely parades itself in naked form. An immoral person commits three sins. He is guilty of untruthfulness because he hides his misbehaviour. The misbehaviour itself is a sin. And thirdly, it demoralizes the other person with whom he misbehaves.

All other vices which the correspondent has mentioned are abstract. We can neither see them nor catch them. They can be discussed only when they become manifest in action. Then only is it possible to think of remedies for them. Suppose a man hates another. As long as that hatred does not lead to some action, the hatred cannot be criticized nor can the jealous person be improved. But when that hatred causes any harm to another, then it can be condemned and the person deserves punishment. The fact is, sexual immorality is given a long rope in the social as well as the legal code, although it causes great harm to society. The thief gets stringent punishment and the poor fellow is almost ostracized by society. But the fashionable debauchee moves freely and goes scot-free. The law turns a blind eye to him. I am convinced that an institution pledged to the service of millions should have no room for debauchees, just as it has no place for thieves and rowdies.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 27-2-1937

[1] The letter is not translated here The correspondent had asked whether vices like untruth, jealousy and hatred were not more harmful than sexual lapses

409. WHY SHOULD THREE ANNAS BE PAID?

I am discussing here a difficulty which I am faced with in Segaon in trying to put into practice to some extent the ideas which I had expressed regarding the rate of wages earned by women spinners for yarn spun by them. I engage in, or permit, as little discussion as possible on the experiments which I am carrying on in Segaon and the hopes which I am entertaining because my experiments are still at a preliminary stage. I neither show definite results nor see any myself. I regard myself as an extremely cautious worker. I work out each task in a scientific spirit. A devotee of truth cannot function in any other way. While working in that manner, I feel it would be thought improper for me to write anything at this stage about my experiments in Segaon. But there can be nothing improper in saying what I have been unable to accomplish to this day.

Now, in my opinion, anyone who puts in one hour of diligent work should get one anna. So that a woman who spins skilfully for an hour should also be paid one anna. I have been unable to make any experienced person put this into effect; and that is as it should be. If crores of Indians start earning an anna an hour, India would become an economically prosperous country. Today, the average annual income of an Indian is fifty to sixty rupees; this is not the minimum income. If, instead, the minimum income becomes one hundred and eighty rupees no one would starve.

However, in Segaon, to this day, I have not been able to pay three annas for eight hours' work to any unemployed person. In Segaon the rate for a man is three annas and for a woman five to six pice. Children of fifteen or sixteen earn something in between. If I could have my way, I would see to it that women are paid the same wages as men. But I have been unable to do even this little bit. And I have been unable to pay, or make others pay, the same rate to the unemployed as is paid to labourers in Segaon. This is because the rate I have mentioned applies to those who do not ordinarily remain unemployed. What I desire is the capacity to pay three annas for eight hours' labour to whosoever comes in search of work. I have not been able to achieve that or make much progress. I cannot accept that I alone am to

blame for this. Partly no doubt my own failing is responsible. But it is for this reason that I have proved for myself and others like me the necessity for living in villages. It is not true that a few months' stay in the villages enables one to solve all its problems. I have never imagined it can. One can have a grasp of rural problems and find solutions for them only when one stays in a village like a true villager from three to five years. Here I have merely noted the difficulties experienced in paying even the unemployed the wage of three annas. At the root of this difficulty I see our inveterate idleness.

The unemployed are so indifferent that if entrusted with some work of which they have no experience, they are not even prepared to consider it. They have formed the habit of agreeing to everything, so they will nod their heads in assent to any suggestion but will do nothing beyond that. However, by mentioning these difficulties I have by no means expressed my despondency. I have expressed my sympathy towards other colleagues who experience similar difficulty. Idleness which has persisted for years cannot be got rid of all at once. Patience is what is required We do not wish to give three annas or even more for eight hours' work by way of a gift, but we wish to create conditions where people can earn this amount. In trying to achieve this lies the education and the test of social workers as well as villagers.

[From Gujarati]
Harijanbandhu, 28-2-1937

410. DEFINITION OF POVERTY

While discussing the question of providing work to the poor living in villages, a gentleman writes to say:

> You had once said that those who engaged labourers to plough their fields could not be called poor. But that is not enough. Can it be said that those who do not suffer from want of food and clothing and do not have to incur debts are not poor?

This question may be answered in the affirmative as well as in the negative. If we consider the matter from the standpoint of health, few persons in the Indian climate suffer from want of clothes. This is because innumerable persons can do with loin-cloths, and it may be said that it does not harm the health. But even persons said to belong to the middle class do not get a proper diet from the nutritional standpoint. Except for a few

wealthy people, all others are unable to get sufficient milk, ghee, vegetables and fruit. They may well afford a drop of dirty milk adulterated with water, and a small quantity of vegetables, but they never get fruit. And because of the want of these three things, crores of people in India, including those of the middle-class, can never maintain good health. Hence, if we examine the matter from the standpoint of health, the number of poor people increases greatly. This however is not the standpoint of the correspondent. For him the question of poverty has arisen in the context of the problem of a minimum wage.

My definition of poverty, if considered from that standpoint, would run as follows: Those who, despite working the whole day, cannot earn even three annas are all poor, because the correspondent has before him only the problem of providing work to the unemployed in the villages. Although this is an imperfect definition, it is of importance to workers. The reason being that if poverty is considered from the standpoint of health, etc., all villagers and many city-dwellers also would be regarded as poor—and actually, they are so. But such a definition confuses the workers.

This does not mean that such persons should not be served. The village-worker is constantly faced with problems of sanitation, health and economic betterment. He is constantly faced with problems of how people should get pure milk and butter-milk in their own villages, how they can obtain vegetables and fruit, how those who do not get sufficient coverings for the winter can do so. And his skill lies in solving these. But no one can solve all problems at once. It is for this very reason that I have given a working definition of poverty so that everyone can realize that it is their dharma to serve the maximum number of poor people and make a beginning in that direction.

[From Gujarati]
Harijanbandhu, 28-2-1937

411. *LETTER TO MOOLSHANKAR NAUTAMLAL*

SEGAON, WARDHA,
February 28, 1937

BHAI MOOLSHANKAR,

You did very well indeed in writing to me.

I see no necessity for you to do anything which would hurt your parents' feelings. It is only when parents push the children

into an obviously immoral course of action that the latter are entitled to disregard them. There is nothing of the sort in your case. In many matters your parents are ready to go along with you. You can do a lot of service even while doing business The ability to earn an honest cowrie is not easy to acquire. Even doing that is a form of service and also tests one's intelligence. For the present, therefore, continue patiently to do what you are doing.

Continue to write to me whenever necessary. If you feel you must come and see me, you may do so.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7946 Also C W 9463. Courtesy: Moolshankar Nautamlal

412 LETTER TO SAMPURNANAND

[February, 1937][1]

How is it that the majority of you Socialists keep such bad health?[2] Narendra Dev is a chronic sufferer from asthma, Meherally[3] is down with heart trouble, Jayaprakash is ill and now you, who seemed to be the healthiest of the lot, are also confined to bed. Evidently none of you can look after himself. Come to Wardha for some time and stay with me I promise to send you back fully cured.

Memories and Reflections, p. 97

413. MESSAGE TO INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS[4]

[Before *March 1, 1937*]

WISH PARLIAMENT SUCCESS. WISH IT COULD DO SOME CONSTRUCTIVE WORK.

The Religions of the World, p 80

[1] This was written after the results of the first election under the Act of 1935 were out in February 1937

[2] The addressee had been suffering from jaundice

[3] Yusuf Meherally

[4] This met for 8 days at Calcutta from March 1, 1937, as part of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa's first birth-centenary celebrations

414. LETTER TO S. AMBUJAMMAL

SEGAON,
March 1, 1937

CHI. AMBUJAM,

I have your letter. What is this—first you are lazy about writing to me and then you apologize. We should apologize only if in spite of our best efforts we fail to do anything. Yes, it is a different thing if you were not able to write because of measles. Hope Mother is well now. I do intend to come to Madras for the conference. We shall meet then. Kanu tries to play on the vina occasionally.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original. Ambujammal Papers Courtesy Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

415. LETTER TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

SEGĀON, WARDHA,
March 2, 1937

DEAR GURUDEV,

Your letter[1] has caused me much distress. That a letter[2] which was written out of love and reverence should have been so misunderstood is a revelation. There was no question of suspicion and, therefore, no question of misjudging you. I simply put before you my meaning of trusteeship. I have been trustee before now of several institutions and I have worn myself out to see that they were properly financed. Acceptance of the burden by me of Visvabharati could mean nothing to me unless it at least meant that I would be able to discharge the financial burden. As to the breach of promise, I thought myself to be so near you that I could dare playfully to accuse you of a contemplated breach of promise. My motive was absolutely plain. I wanted, somehow or other, to wean you from any further begging expedition—a phrase

[1] This is not traceable

[2] *Vide* p. 381

which you and I used often enough in Delhi. Of course I know your religion and all India is proud of it. Let us have as much of it as you can give but never with the burden hanging over your head of collecting money for Visvabharati against the expression of yourself before the public.

I hope this letter will undo the grief that has been caused to you by my previous letter.

With love and reverence,

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat G N 8749

416. LETTER TO NAVINCHANDRA N. DESAI

March 2, 1937

CHI. NAVIN,

I got your letter. You seem to be doing good work. May you succeed in your effort. The boys and girls always have my blessings. Guard their character. May they ever grow in body, mind and spirit.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N 2171

417. LETTER TO TARABEHN N. MASHRUWALA

SEGAON,
March 2, 1937

CHI. TARI,

You never adhere to your dates. Nine times you yourself fail to stick to them and the tenth time Providence prevents you. Thinking that you must certainly have left for Ahmednagar, I wrote to you there. Perhaps the letter will reach you after wandering from place to place, for now your going to Ahmednagar is uncertain and even after going there who knows for how many days you will stay there. Bachu must have recovered.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G N. 6701. Also C W 4346. Courtesy. Kanubhai N Mashruwala

418. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

March 2, 1937

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

I got your letter. You should do whatever little service comes naturally to you and be satisfied. Let [the mind] wander if it will If you do not worry unduly, in course of time it will calm down or the body will fall. About the body, whether one's own or another's, beyond a limit one should not worry.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati C W 393 Courtesy Bhagwanji P Pandya

419. LETTER TO SHARDABEHN C. SHAH

SEGAON, WARDHA,
March 2, 1937

CHI. SHARDA,

Received your letter.

There is no reason at all to be scared of hip-baths. The secret is that you should not feel cold while sitting in the tub and the body should be sufficiently warm after coming out of the tub. For this, you should bring warmth to the body either by walking or by covering yourself up in bed or by pouring over yourself a few mugs of hot water after the hip-bath.

Friction-bath can be taken . . . [1] The bather should perch on a stool, with the private parts kept away from the edge of the stool They should then be rubbed with a piece of cloth repeatedly soaked in the tub-water. This is what is called friction-bath. The idea behind it is as follows: there is a complex of nerves at the opening of the organ. The effect on them spreads throughout the body with lightning speed. This effect is quite the opposite of that produced by masturbation and other bad habits And this checks many diseases and cures many others.

Garlic should not be chewed. It should be ground and mixed with vegetables like a sauce. Some people take it with

[1] The original is not clear here

curds. If you can get fresh garlic it is better than dry garlic If sweet limes and oranges are available no other fruits are required. If you can get good palm *gur*, you can carry on well with it. You must get good milk. A person like you cannot stay where good milk is not available. Garlic never gives a cold, rather it cures a cold.

I can say without hesitation that the increase in Chimanlal's weight is due to his taking earth treatment.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9972 Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

420. *LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR*[1]

[Before *March 3, 1937*][2]

You are going to the Dharma Sabha—the Parliament of Religions It is associated with the holy name of Shri Ramakrishna.[3] I do hope that the Sabha will do something that will give a lead and will guide the followers of all faiths. What will the Parliament say in respect of all the religions? Are all the religions equal as we hold or is there any one particular religion which is in the sole possession of truth, the rest being either untrue or a mixture of truth and error as many believe? The opinion of the Parliament in such matters must prove helpful guidance for us.

The Religions of the World, p. 123

[1] The original, which was in Hindi, is not traceable

[2] This was quoted by the addressee in his Presidential speech delivered on 3-3-1937 at the Fourth Session of the International Parliament of Religions held at Calcutta.

[3] *Vide* footnote 4, p. 409

421. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
March 3, 1937

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your letter. I also read your statement. As is your wont, you have made it brief and simple. No sentence in it could be omitted.

If Chi Kamu asks you for money, give it to her. I will of course write to her.

Chi. Radha barely writes to me once in a year. I don't know anything regarding her scholarship For the present go on sending her what you have been doing. If I feel the urge, I will write to her some time.

I don't know anything regarding Keshu's betrothal. Do you want me to keep that in mind, or do you want to know whether I am aware that you know about it?

Chi. Mira is living with me in Segaon. She teaches spinning and carding to five or six children in the village. She will most probably write to you today.

Chi. Balkoba's health is, one may say, fairly good. I meet him every day.

I don't like it at all that Chi. Purushottam keeps bad health. He must make a determined effort to improve it, within the limits voluntarily accepted by him. In the matter of improving one's health, lethargy is a sin. The human body is both *Kurukshetra* and a *dharmakshetra*. In so far as it is a *dharmakshetra*, it is one's duty to keep it in good shape.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8515. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

422. INTERVIEW TO AN EGYPTIAN DEPUTATION[1]

March 3, 1937

"It was impossible to come to India and go away without seeing you," they said to Gandhiji, to which Gandhiji jokingly said:

And yet you come here at the fag end of your visit.

With Gandhiji the only topic they discussed was that of cementing the relations between India and Egypt

GANDHIJI : I should heartily welcome the co-operation.

SHEIKH IBRAHIM EL GIBALI. We hope the day will not be far off when India regains her past glory and revives her ancient civilization We have many things in common, climate, colour, food, and we are orientals The time has come for us to come closer together

PROF HABIB AHMED: We have discovered it is not good for both the countries to rely on their older generations. They should rely more on the younger generations Our youths should go to India and yours should come to Egypt as sportsmen

G. Not only may we have an exchange and a mixing together in the field of sport but we should have it in the field of education. We should invite professors from Egypt and you should invite those from India, so that we may develop cultural contacts.

SHEIKH IBRAHIM EL GIBALI: This end can be attained if there is an intellectual fusion of blood between both countries

G. That is true, and to reach some kind of solution I would suggest your making a public declaration of this kind. I make an offer. If you kindly send an Egyptian lad of intelligence and resourcefulness, we will welcome him and adopt him here You will see the maker of this place, Jamnalal Bajaj. There is not a public institution here which does not owe its existence to him. He has had no college education, but he has a heart of gold and he has lavishly given of his gold for the welfare of the country. He has a school here where he has Hindu and Mussalman boys. There

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter" The deputation was from Al Azaar University and included among others Sheikh Ibrahim El Gibali as its leader and Prof. Habib Ahmed and Prof. Salah Eldin.

is provision there for Urdu teaching for Mussalman boys. He has secured a Principal who is an ideal teacher. So if you will send a promising lad, we will adopt him here and he will be like a seed which will grow into a mighty tree. Then there is the Jamia Millia in Delhi where there are fine men like Dr. Zakir Husain, Prof. Mujeeb, and you can exchange boys and professors with the Jamia. Make our boys Egyptian and we will make yours Indian. Our different religions should not matter. If you will respect our religion and we respect yours, there should be no bar to a healthy development of these relations. Identity of hearts is what is wanted, and if that is there everything will follow.

Harijan, 13-3-1937

423. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

March 4, 1937

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I hope you had a comfortable journey and reached there safely. Throw off all burden from your mind and get better quickly. I will not let anybody do any washing in your tub. At present it is kept in my room and I have reserved it for my use If, therefore, I don't need the bigger one, it will remain in my room. There was a letter from Saraswati addressed to you. It is enclosed.

Blessings from[1]
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G.N. 374

424. LETTER TO SURENDRA B. MASHRUWALA

SEGAON, WARDHA,
March 4, 1937

CHI. SURENDRA,

I am having consultations about the date of your marriage. I gather that you desire the marriage to take place in proper style You are even thinking of a gathering of friends. If that is so, please let me know your reason. One reason I have understood. You feel that all of us elders have enjoyed celebrations of marriages

[1] The subscription is in Urdu.

in our time and now we are out to stop persons like you from doing that, and you ask why. This is a pure misconception. If, according to our custom, we regard marriage as a festive occasion, a person can enjoy the celebration only once. Now as regards myself, I may tell you that whatever happened happened when I was only twelve years of age. My parents did not ask for my consent in regard to anything. If anybody had enjoyed the celebrations, it was they and the other relatives. I am not aware of having enjoyed the occasion. Whatever fun I may have had at that time was much in the same way as children enjoy play I had no sense at all of the responsibility of the occasion. This is how I enjoyed the celebration. I do not know anything of Kishorelal. You need not, therefore, envy my enjoyment. What I wish is that on the day fixed you should come alone. I will get all the religious ceremonies performed and, after they are over, you may take away Manu on the very same day. If you want to have a gathering of friends, you may have one at Akola or Bombay. I have no zest at all for such things. I am not talking about renunciation but only about common duty. Nowadays some thinkers have elevated sensual enjoyment to the position of a dharma. I have not been able to accept this view. In my opinion marriage is a means of observing self-control. It is desirable that men and women should have only one connection and not many. This is their duty. Marriage should be for service, not for self-indulgence. The relationship of man and woman is only for progeny and should have no other purpose. This is the ideal. Certainly one cannot say that this ideal is wrong simply because it cannot be attained. But if it is right, it is one's duty to follow it in practice to the best of one's ability. And if such is indeed one's duty, then the marriage ceremony should be made as religious, quiet and austere as possible. If you understand this, then you and Manu should look upon marriage as a new birth and should enter it with a sense of duty. Do not regard marriage as a festive occasion but enter the householder's estate with the blessings of elders and with full understanding of the meaning of marriage. If you have understood this, you will give up insisting on inviting anybody. If I can I will stop even Nanabhai, Neelkanth and others from coming and wasting money on travelling. Notwithstanding these views of mine, however, I do not wish to hurt you. You may, therefore, unhesitatingly let me know whatever you desire.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Manu has read this letter and agrees with me.

From Gujarati: C.W. 1564. Courtesy: Manubehn S. Mashruwala

425. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

March 4, 1937

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

You must have reached there safely. I do feel a little worried about your health. If you carry out my suggestions, the fits of giddiness will certainly disappear. Do put mud-packs on the stomach and the head. They are bound to benefit you. Don't feel the slightest hesitation or shame about eating onions and garlic There is a letter from Saraswati addressed to you which I am sending with this.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N. 3488

426. LETTER TO SARASWATI

March 4, 1937

CHI. SARASWATI,

I had your letter after a long interval. What subjects are you studying? I want all the details, such as how far you have progressed in mathematics. By now that subject, too, you must be finding interesting.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6155. Also C.W. 3424. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

427. LETTER TO VITHAL L. PHADKE

SEGAON, WARDHA,
March 5, 1937

CHI. MAMA,

I got your letter. I have studied the plan. I once again remembered the original ashram at Godhra. After spending Rs. 3,000, how many untouchables will you have uplifted? I cannot understand your scheme. I was under the impression that you would spend at the most Rs. 1,000. Your plan is suitable not for a temple but for a prince's court or palace. But what can I say when a donor like Sardar is ready to satisfy you? But if I got Rs. 3,000, I would spend out of it not more than Rs. 1,000 on a hut for myself, fencing and the temple, and spend the rest in the service of the Harijans in other ways. Kaka has gone to Calcutta. I am sending your plan first to Vinoba and then to Kishorelal. At the earliest I could have replied yesterday, but that could not be done.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3838

428. DISCUSSION WITH R. R. KEITHAHN[1]

[March 5, 1937][2]

Mr. Keithahn was not quite sure what was at the back of Gandhiji's mind when he said that all religions were not only true but equal. Scientifically, he felt, it was hardly correct to say that all religions are equal. People would make comparisons between animists and theists. "I would say," said Mr. Keithahn, "it is no use comparing religions. They are different ways. Do you think we can explain the thing in different terms?

GANDHIJI: You are right when you say that it is impossible to compare them. But the deduction from it is that they are equal. All men are born free and equal, but one is much stronger or weaker than another physically and mentally. Therefore superficially there is no equality between the two. But

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter". R. R. Keithahn was an American missionary.

[2] From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary

R. C. F. Of course all the Christian sects are not united.

G. Then you are asking only a theoretical question. And may I ask you, is there any amalgamation between Islam and Christianity, though both are said to believe in one God? If these two have not amalgamated, there is less hope of amalgamation of Christians and Hindus along the lines you suggest. I have my own solution, but in the first instance I dispute the description that Hindus believe in many gods and are idolators. They do say there are many gods, but they also declare unmistakably that there is One God, God of gods. It is therefore not proper to suggest that Hindus believe in many gods. They certainly believe in many worlds. Just as there is a world inhabited by men and another by beasts, so also is there one inhabited by superior beings called gods, whom we do not see but who nevertheless exist The whole mischief is created by the English rendering of the words *deva* or *devata* for which you have not found a better term than 'god'. But god is Ishwara, Devadhideva, God of gods. So you see it is the word 'god', used to describe different divine beings, that has given rise to such confusion. I believe that I am a thorough Hindu but I never believe in many gods. Never even in my childhood did I hold that belief, and no one ever taught me to do so.

As for idol-worship, you cannot do without it in some form or other. Why does a Mussalman give his life for defending a mosque which he calls a house of God? And why does a Christian go to a church and when he is required to take an oath swear by the Bible? Not that I see any objection to it. And what is it if not idolatry to give untold riches for building mosques and tombs? And what do the Roman Catholics do when they kneel before Virgin Mary and before saints —quite imaginary figures in stone or painted on canvas or glass?

R C F But I keep my mother's photo and kiss it in veneration of her But I do not worship it, nor do I worship saints When I worship God, I acknowledge Him as Creator and greater than any human being.

G. Even so, it is not the stone we worship but it is God we worship in images of stone or metal however crude they may be.

R. C. F But villagers worship stones as God.

G. No, I tell you they do not worship anything that is less than God. When you kneel before Virgin Mary and ask for her intercession, what do you do? You ask to establish contact with God through her. Even so a Hindu seeks to establish

contact with God through a stone image. I can understand your asking for the Virgin's intercession. Why are Mussalmans filled with awe and exultation when they enter a mosque? Why, is not the whole universe a mosque? And what about the magnificent canopy of heaven that spreads over you? Is it any less than a mosque? But I understand and sympathize with the Muslims. It is their way of approach to God. The Hindus have their own way of approach to the same Eternal Being. Our media of approach are different, but that does not make Him different.

R C F But the Catholics believe that God revealed to them the true way.

G. But why do you say that the will of God is expressed only in one book called the Bible and not in others? Why do you circumscribe the power of God?

R. C. F. But Jesus proved that he had received the word of God through miracles

G. But that is Mahomed's claim too. If you accept Christian testimony you must accept Muslim testimony and Hindu testimony too.

R. C. F. But Mahomed said he could not do miracles.

G. No. He did not want to prove the existence of God by miracles. But he claimed to receive messages from God.

R C F We are glad the Congress has had a great success. But what about its veering round to communism?

G. Has it? I do not see it. But if it does, and if it is not the Russian model, I do not mind it. For what does communism mean in the last analysis? It means a classless society —an ideal that is worth striving for. Only I part company with it when force is called to aid for achieving it. We are all born equal, but we have all these centuries resisted the will of God. The idea of inequality, of 'high and low' is an evil, but I do not believe in eradicating evil from the human breast at the point of the bayonet. The human breast does not lend itself to that means.

R C F. When Hinduism comes to power, will it not make a united front against Christianity? There are all the signs of Hinduism coming to power And if it happens here, as it is happening in Spain, Indian Christians will be despised and persecuted and swept off

G. It is an impossible picture. There is no such thing as Hindu rule, there will be no such thing. How can anyone eradicate a population of seven million Christians? And that presupposes the destruction of Mussalmans too! Let me tell you that no Hindu in his wildest imagination ever thought of this. Will the world tolerate any such thing? If Hinduism ever sought to do it, it would be committing suicide But I tell you that has never been the desire of the Hindus. Hinduism was well able to destroy the first Christians that came. Why did it not do anything of the kind? Travancore is a brilliant example of toleration. I was asked while I was there to see the most ancient church where St. Thomas is said to have planted the first Cross. Why should he have been allowed to plant it?

R. C. F. But in St. Francis Xavier's time[1] there came a time when Christians were persecuted But I do not know history and my information may be incorrect But what makes me afraid is what I actually saw and heard in Japan There I heard in a public speech a responsible man saying, 'Buddhism is the religion of Japan, we must consolidate it, all other religions should be destroyed '

G. Well, well, no Hindu dreams of such a thing. Even if he dreamt it, it would be impossible.

But now the Father revealed his bugbear—Arya Samaj!

G. I agree that the Arya Samaj represents a type of militant Hinduism, but they never believed in the cult of the sword. The worst thing they are capable of is to ask you to become a Hindu if you went and spoke on their platform!

R. C. F. But I have heard Arya Samajists say that Christianity is a Western religion, and as everything that comes from the West is to be discarded, Christianity must also be discarded.

G. I have never heard of the talk of Christianity being blotted out of India. The Arya Samaj is a community that asks its followers to go to the ends of the earth to preach Arya Dharma, but they have not yet done so. It has a firm foothold in the Punjab. Arya supremacy in the sense you dread is an inconceivable thing. The Hindus are really not the major community if you put the rest together. But why should I prolong the discussion? It is not a practical proposition at all.

Harijan, 13-3-1937

[1] St Francis Xavier was in India during 1541-45.

430. AS OTHERS SEE US

Here is a letter[1] which has been lying on my file for some time:

> Your attitude towards religious conversion and particularly the hope you entertain for the Depressed Classes within the fold of Hinduism, overlooks the prevalent practices of Hinduism as it exists in India today . . .
>
> Any religion is judged by its fruits. Here is a contrast Take the case of the Christian religion, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant The funds that are collected from the rich and poor are carefully accounted for and repaid in the form of medical and educational service Religious worship is open to all alike The number of schools, colleges, dispensaries, hospitals and orphanages admirably served by their religious institution bear eloquent testimony to the quality of faith that is in them. It is not a theology and philosophy which they possess but the self-sacrificing service which they render in abundant measure towards all that is a contrast to the service rendered by the temples and mutts What are the uses of the wealth of temples and mutts? Are not these weapons of superstition and oppression? The heads of these mutts live princely lives with vast endowments, I am informed that there are regular lawyers to collect dues and serve the interests of these religious heads, swamis and gurus This state of affairs is an oppression worse than popery in its worst days Not merely the accumulated wealth and the annual collections, which in all these mutts must amount to several crores, are never properly accounted for, but this gigantic system of ghastly exploitation continues to be supported by the most intellectual leaders of the people as if Hindu society will break up by questioning it. This is practical Hinduism Why should there be any surprise that the Depressed Classes alone should revolt against a system which denies them equal rights to worship the Deity but keeps them also in perpetual social excommunication? Why is it that no one ventures to question the priestly oppression, this draining away annually the wealth of the people without any service whatever? . . .
>
> . . . It is exploitation by religious heads that has crushed the people, and the money-lender and the State combined have finished

[1] Only extracts are reproduced here.

the process. It is not more work and harder work, and the variety of cottage industries that these half-dead half-living masses require, but more vocational schools and dispensaries, maternity and child-welfare centres and better food . . If the State is not moved very easily by your Herculean endeavours, Hinduism requires a far more drastic purge as it has been established some thousands of years longer than this alien Government. . . .

Bishops and priests of the Christian religion, in spite of the fierce criticism levelled against them in this land and every other country, render humanitarian service unequalled by any other class of human beings who follow any other faith or no faith, and are approachable to all people. . . .

It is good to see ourselves as others see us. Try as we may, we are never able to know ourselves fully as we are, especially the evil side of us. This we can do only if we are not angry with our critics but will take in good part whatever they might have to say. Anyway, I propose to examine the foregoing criticism as dispassionately as I can. The grave limitations of Hinduism as it is seen today in practice must be admitted. Many mutts and their administration are undoubtedly a disgrace to Hinduism. The money that is poured into some of them does not return to the worshippers in the form of service. This state of things must be ended or mended.

Humanitarian work done by Christian missions must also be admitted.

But these admissions of mine must not be interpreted to mean endorsement of the deductions of the writer. Economic and educational relief is required by most poor Indians in common with Harijans. But the latter suffer from special disabilities. It is not a question of what disabilities they resent. It is the duty of the so-called superior Hindus to break the chains that bind the Harijans even though they may hug them. The admission by the writer of the sublimity of Hinduism as expounded by Vivekanand and Radhakrishnan should have led to his discovery of its percolation down to the masses. I make bold to say that in spite of the crudeness which one sees among the villagers, class considered, in all that is good in human nature they compare favourably with any villagers in the world. This testimony is borne out by the majority of travellers who from the times of Huen Tsang down to the present times have recorded their impressions. The innate culture that the villagers of India show, the art which one sees in the homes of the poor,

the restraint with which the villagers conduct themselves, are surely due to the religion that has bound them together from time immemorial.

In his zeal to belittle Hinduism, the writer ignores the broad fact that Hinduism has produced a race of reformers who have successfully combated prejudices, superstitions and abuses. Without any drum-beating Hinduism has devised a system of relief of the poor which has been the envy of many foreign admirers. I myself feel that it leaves much to be desired It has its evil side. But from the philanthropic standpoint it has wholly justified itself It is not the Indian habit to advertise charities through printed reports and the like. But he who runs may see the free kitchens and free medical relief given along indigenous lines.

The writer belittles village work It betrays gross ignorance. If the mutts and the revenue offices were extinguished and free schools were opened, the people would not be cured of their inertia. Mutts must be reformed, the revenue system must be overhauled, free primary schools must be established in every village. But starvation will not disappear because people pay no revenue and mutts are destroyed and schools spring up in every village The greatest education in the villages consists in the villagers being taught or induced to work methodically and profitably all the year round whether it be on the land or at industries connected with the villages.

Lastly, my correspondent seems to resent acceptance by us of humanitarian services by missionaries. Will he have an agitation led against these missionary institutions? Why should they have non-Christian aid? They are established with the view of weaning Indians from their ancestral faith even as expounded by Vivekanand and Radhakrishnan. Let them isolate the institutions from the double purpose. It will be time enough then to expect non-Christian aid. The critic must be aware of the fact that even as it is some of these institutions do get non-Christian aid. My point is that there should be no complaint if they do not receive such aid so long as they have an aim which is repugnant to the non-Christian sentiment.

Harijan, 6-3-1937

431. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

SEGAON, WARDHA,
March 6, 1937

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I got your letter today, Saturday. You seem to have reached there quite in time. Amtul[1] was saved miraculously . . .[2] You have asked me to suggest a name for the girl. But what do I know about that. I can only think of "Amina" or "Fatima". It is the aunt's prerogative to name a baby and you are the aunt. It is for you, therefore, to choose the name. You have suggested that I should write to Amtul, but you have not given me even her full name. Please, therefore, show the following to her.

"I congratulate you on both you and your daughter having been saved by God. But Amtul Salaam tells me that you had wanted a boy. I know that many women have such a wish. But it is not a proper wish Why should we give so much importance to whether it is a boy or a girl? We should be happy with whatever God sends us. May God give you both a long life."

You may certainly write to Maulana Saheb[3] whatever you wish and obtain any *fatwa* that you like. I only wish to see you at peace with yourself anyhow.

I have had a talk with Kanu. He says that he had no wish whatever to give up his present work. If he had not been engrossed in the *Ramayana* work, he would have liked to do khadi work with you. But he feels that he would be violating his pledge if he gave up the work to which he has dedicated himself. If, therefore, you want Kanu's help in khadi work, you can have it only in Wardha.

Now that you have got work of your liking there, your health must improve. But you are bound to continue to be ill so long as your mind is not at peace.

Blessings to Rashid[4] and your sister-in-law[5].

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 375

[1] Wife of addressee's brother, Wahid Khan
[2] Omission as in the source
[3] Abul Kalam Azad
[4] Addressee's brother
[5] Hosa Rashid, Rashid's wife

432. LETTER TO SHARDABEHN C. SHAH

SEGAON,
March 6, 1937

CHI. SHARDA,

You had completely forgotten me. But it is nice to receive your letter even after so many months. I believe that I will be able to render you considerable help in improving your health if you keep on writing to me.

Read carefully the letter I have written to Chimanlal[1] If you follow those instructions I have absolutely no doubt that your body will become like copper. Have you heard the saying that the first happiness is good health?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9973. Courtesy. Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

433. HOW TO BEGIN[2]

My invitation in these columns some time back to such khadi workers as may be anxious to become adepts in the various processes relating to the production of khadi,[3] has evoked a wide response and I have already received several communications on the subject. The object of the following remarks is to set forth a few practical hints for the guidance of these friends.

The first essential condition for anyone who wants to become master of any subject is to have a living faith in it. He must next have the eagerness to learn and readiness to make the necessary sacrifice for its sake. Books, teachers and other accessories of education are of course necessary in a more or less degree, but passion for knowledge and eagerness to learn are the most essential of all. Given these, the other things will follow of themselves. I would therefore suggest to these intending students of

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Chimanlal N. Shah", pp. 350-1.

[2] The Gujarati original of this was published in the *Harijanbandhu*, 7-3-1937. The translation is by Pyarelal.

[3] *Vide* "What Khadi Workers Should Know", pp. 365-7.

the khadi science that they can at once make a beginning by finding out what processes relative to khadi production are being carried out in their immediate neighbourhood and picking up all the useful information with regard to them available there. The main task that faces a student of the khadi science today is collation and co-ordination of personal experience. A number of different processes relating to the production of khadi are today in vogue in different parts of the country. But there is no single person today who fully knows all of them. And yet a complete, detailed knowledge of all these different processes is necessary before the science of khadi can be developed. The task is obviously beyond the compass of a single individual But if there are a number of persons who are truly fired by a scientific spirit of research and they apply themselves to the task in a systematic manner, they will, by pooling their talents and experience, be able to evolve a living, growing science of khadi in a short time. But before they can do that, they will need to have themselves collectively mastered all the processes of khadi production that are in vogue in the country today.

To take a concrete instance, several varieties of khadi are produced in different parts of Andhra today, employing different methods of carding. Now any khadi worker in Andhra who is anxious to acquire the science of khadi can begin by mastering all these various methods. For this he need not quit his province. Let him by way of a start pick up the process which is current in his immediate neighbourhood. A scientific study of carding would, of course, include a knowledge of the construction of the carding-bow on the part of the student. He would further need to know the materials from which the gut string and other component parts of a carding-bow are made and how; what exactly the length of a carding-bow should be in order to yield the best results, and the effects of departure from the standard length; where precisely the stroke on the bow-string should be delivered and the reason why, and so on in respect of a host of other questions about which even the best of our professional carders today know little and care even less. Similarly, with regard to cotton a worker who takes up a study of carding as a science would need to know all about the different varieties of cotton; the length, strength and fineness of their respective fibres, the various processes through which it has to pass before it reaches his hands; where it is grown; what is the yield per acre and the total money value of the crop; what is the extent of the area under cotton; what was the crop grown there previously

which has been displaced, or was the area under question lying fallow before; what difference it would make to the cultivator if another crop were substituted in place of cotton; etc. Thus his practical experience will be illumined by scientific knowledge and give him such a firm grip of his subject and an insight into its intricacies that to master the other processes of carding prevailing in different parts of Andhra will become comparatively an easy thing for him and take but little time. If, further, he keeps regular notes of his experiments and experiences, they will in time take the place of an authoritative treatise on the science of carding.

It will be thus seen that no khadi worker need leave his field of work in order to learn the science of khadi. If he is fired by the spirit of inquiry and has patience and capacity for concentrated application in a sufficient measure, he will, by applying himself to an intensive study of the processes for which his neighbourhood offers special facilities, not only become a specialist in those particular processes but also gradually widen the scope of his knowledge so as to deserve the name science.

Harijan, 10-4-1937

434. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
March 7, 1937

BHAI MUNSHI,

I got your letter. Please do stay with me in Delhi.

I have understood your view. These ministries have made our task difficult everywhere. Our ability, spirit of self-sacrifice and selflessness are going to be put to a severe test. Let us see what happens. We shall discuss the problem in Delhi. I shall reach there on the 15th morning.

I hope both of you are well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 7612. Courtesy: K. M. Munshi

435. LETTER TO VIDYA A. HINGORANI

March 7, 1937

CHI. VIDYA,

I have your letter. Only a few days ago I had written a long letter to Anand. Whatever the circumstances we should live peacefully.

Tell Mahadev he is talking of binding me, but when he comes here will he allow himself to be bound?

What treatment are you undergoing nowadays? Is it giving you any relief or not? Write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Hindi: Courtesy: National Archives of India and Anand T. Hingorani

436. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

Unrevised

SEGAON, WARDHA,
March 8, 1937

MY DEAR REBEL,

I have an excuse for writing to you. You have left a small blue bottle. It contains a white powder resembling epsom salt. What is it? I do hope you had no trouble in the train. The moral is no onion, no sweet potatoes, a fair quantity of garlic. Bowels ought not to be loose. Hip and friction sitz baths and garlic ought to set the bowels right and eradicate eczema. You must take at least 3 lb. of milk per day. Try unboiled fresh milk twice a day. It must be taken whilst it is yet warm from the udder.

Your place is vacant and looks dismal. Fancy doing without one's Secretary ever at your side! But such is life, everything fleeting, only God is, nothing else is.

ईशावास्यम् इदम् सर्वम् यत् किञ्च जगत्याम् जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्वित् धनम् ॥

I have written it breaking up the *sandhi*.
Love.

BAPU

[PS.]
Forgot to give you Hindi *Anasaktiyoga*. I am writing to Delhi.[1]

From the original: C.W. 3764. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G N. 6920

437. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

March 8, 1937

CHI. PRABHA,

I duly received your letter yesterday. Why have you given no description of the journey? If you don't worry, your health is bound to remain good. Take hip-baths. Eat garlic. Procure fresh milk. Take ghee and butter in sufficient quantity. And eat whatever fruit you can get. Rajkumari left this morning. She was reluctant to go. She will stay for four days in Delhi. Amtul Salaam has gone to Indore. She left on Tuesday. The house has become empty now. Khan Saheb also is not here. And there is plenty of milk. Everybody is fine. Bhansali is still in hospital. He is better now.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3492

438. LETTER TO VIYOGI HARI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
March 8, 1937

BHAI VIYOGI HARI,

Anasaktiyoga in Hindi should be available at the Sasta Sahitya Mandal. If it is available there or anywhere else, do arrange to send a copy of it to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, care of Mr. Fielden, 4, Bhagwandas Road, New Delhi. We reach Delhi on Monday.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G N. 1096

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Viyogi Hari", *infra*.

439. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,
March 9, 1937

CHI. KANTI,

I got your letter. It would be best to write immediately about things I ought to know. I will leave here for Delhi on Sunday. I don't think I shall have much time to talk with Devdas. The whole day I shall be busy meeting people. You can certainly study in Mysore also. The climate is undoubtedly good and Mysore has a university of its own.

I understand about the railway. Amtul Salaam has gone to Indore.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7317. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

440. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON,
March 10, 1937

MY DEAR REBEL,

Herewith Bishop Moore's[1] letter and copy of my reply[2]. Please return after perusal. If you have read the appeal[3] and you do not agree with the Bishop's reading, you should pass on to him your own interpretation.

Your wire gave me great joy.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3765. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6921

[1] Of Travancore

[2] This is not traceable.

[3] Of the Church Missionary Society; *vide* "Interview to Bishop Moore, Bishop Abraham and Others", pp. 285-6.

441. LETTER TO TILAKAM

March 10, 1937

MY DEAR TILAKAM,

I was glad to hear from you at last. Whatever others do or do not do, we do believe in ahimsa and have to persevere in the sure hope that it will triumph in the end. Mathuradas Trikumji will certainly see you and properly guide you also. You do not need any other introduction to him beyond this letter. You can tell him that you were with me at Kingsley Hall in London, that you were in the Sabarmati for some time and that you are still in touch with me.

Mirabehn is living with me in Segaon and so is Pyarelal. Devdas is in Delhi.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. TILAKAM
THE BOMBAY INDUSTRIAL CO-OP. BANK LTD.
188 MASJID BUNDER ROAD
BOMBAY

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

443. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

March 10, 1937

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I got your letter. I am replying to it as soon as I got it.

I will reach Delhi on the 15th and will have to stay there, it seems, up to the 18th. Perhaps it may be a day longer.

Yes, you are right in believing that you need not go to Rajkot now.

Pilani is far away from Delhi and is not on the way to Delhi either. But you can certainly go there whenever you wish to.

You yourself had written to me saying that you wished to ask for a *fatwa* from Maulana Saheb.

I was very glad to learn that Amtul keeps good health. The stiches also must have been removed now, and the baby must be fine, too.

Rajkumari also has left, and so we are very few here now. Harjivan also left today.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 376

443. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

Unrevised

SEGAON,
March 11, 1937

CHI. NARANDAS,

You of course read what I have been writing about khadi these days. And you have also read Maganlal's book[1]. Will you, taking that book as your guide or according to any other plan you like, write something on the science of khadi? For a historical account, you will need literature on the subject. If you don't have it or have no time to read it, please see if you can write a book giving an account of the work being done now and giving information about all the processes from cotton onwards.

You must have read my questionnaire and Lakshmidas's article. We must have a book giving all that information.

Kamu writes that she has now started going to school.

I read your printed programme. I didn't like it as well as I did your statement. The portion in dialogue form is certainly excellent, but it can't be said to have been artistically interwoven with the rest. That, however, is a minor defect. I notice spelling mistakes too. The Vidyapith dictionary is an authority for us. I don't know if it contains the words *peen*, *reeban*, *chipia*, etc. If it does, you should look them up. Now the dictionary does not at all give the word *pin*. In English the vowel is short and we should spell the word accordingly. I went through the rules about spelling and there also it is stated that words borrowed from foreign languages should be spelt in conformity with their spellings in those languages. Moreover, the word *peen* has a definite meaning in Gujarati. The dictionary explains it as "thick", "well-fed", "rounded". At first sight I didn't get the meaning of *peen*, but I made it out as I proceeded further. In the dialogue you have spelt the word as *cheepeeo*. It should be *cheepio*. It is followed in the same sentence by *reeban*[2]. In English the word

[1] *Vanat Shastra*, Part I
[2] Ribbon

is pronounced as "riban" and that is how it should be spelt according to the rule given in the dictionary. The word is not given in the dictionary, though there is no harm in using it all the same. You will find many more of similar other spelling mistakes.

I see no poetry in the *bhajan* or song "He is the witless man". The language jars on the ear and the thought also is none too pleasant. The very first syllable augurs ill. There is no such word as *murakh*. The word is *moorakh*. The thought in the line "feeds the foreigner lovingly" is indicative of ill will. It does not befit a follower of non-violence. And if a foreigner is hungry, why should not one feed him lovingly? Of course the meaning in the author's mind is different, but the reader is not concerned with the meaning in an author's mind if it is not expressed in his language. In the phrase, *deshana dukkhne tane*, the syllable "na" should be nasalized. The expression "to serve the stones of unemployment" lacks moderation. The metaphor also is not happy. The thought in "The fine noose of the craze for fancifulness" is touched with bitterness. A noose cannot be described as "fine", nor can it be said that the word "fine" has been used ironically. The word *greeva* is not in keeping with the authòr's attempt to use rustic language. The spelling *januni* is incorrect. The word is *janani*. But I will not go on with this criticism. Go through the second part from this point of view. I felt the whole poem crabbed and unpleasant. The other song also didn't interest me. I have not read it carefully, though. But *Vidhatara* did catch my eye. Nanavati suggests that it must have been a misprint. The author must have written *Vidhatra*. If that is correct, please note that the dictionary gives no word like *Vidhatara*. It gives *Vidhata* and *Vidhatri*. A poet has no right to alter spellings of words without sufficient reason.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8516 Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi.

444. LETTER TO JETHALAL G. SAMPAT

March 11, 1937

CHI. JETHALAL,

You were writing something on khadi. What happened to that? How is your work going on? What is the situation about leather?

A gentleman by name Keshavlal who lives in Bombay writes, "Jethalal's daughter Indu died after an illness of twenty-two days." He has not given any address. Can you throw some light on this?

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9860. Courtesy: Narayan J. Sampat

445. LETTER TO VITHAL L. PHADKE

SEGAON,
March 12, 1937

CHI. MAMA,

It is very strange that you saw anger in my letter[1]. Maybe mere admonition is considered anger, but if no admonition is given there is also the fear that a person may not wake up. There is certainly an art of merely expressing one's opinion in pleasing language without admonition, but I have not been able to acquire that art. I know this also, that it is an aspect of ahimsa. If I saw the letter written to you I would certainly be able to know whether there was ahimsa or only *himsa* in it. I do not know Vinoba's and Kishorelal's views. I have certainly not met them. I do not remember to have sent a copy of my letter to them. Be that as it may, even after reading Raiji's letter, I stick to my views. I believe that one should not yield to the temptation of solving a problem. Such external standards as cannot be followed by many had better be abandoned. The letter to Raiji is enclosed.[2]

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3839

[1] *Vide* p. 419.
[2] *Vide* the following item.

446. LETTER TO RAIJI

March 12, 1937

BHAI RAIJI,

I got your letter. It was good that you wrote. I could not agree with your argument. The idea of serving many aims in planning the construction of temples does not appeal to me. In my opinion, good lies in implementing all these ideas gradually. How can a person whom we would not like to keep in our house be permitted to stay in a temple? A temple should never be allowed to be a shelter for vagabonds. Only holy men are a worthy sight in a temple compound. If you brothers cherish the idea of making the temple God's abode, then it is desirable that you do not transform it into a place of self-seeking. If your ideas are carried out, God will suffocate in that place although it may be called a temple. I would personally wish that you should never copy the failings of the Hindus who consider themselves as belonging to the upper castes. I may remind you that Bhangi friends twice took an oath before me that they would give up drinking and twice broke it. But I too am made of ordinary clay as you are. So we need not put a high value on the knowledge that you may be able to gain from me, but, if you desire to make the temple a true abode of God, then do not make it a shelter for persons of doubtful worth and a place for storing utensils of use to the community. Instead, the moment the temple is opened you should take before the deity installed inside a pledge to abjure drink, and cling to it; then although the temple may have taken only Rs 5 to build instead of Rs. 5,000, it will still become a shrine of pilgrimage. I should like the place where Mama stays to be such a holy place, and a temple like that cannot be built by spending money. Now do what you and Mamasaheb think proper.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3840

447. THE COW

The cow is an object of worship and veneration to millions in India. I count myself among them. The cow-shed in Segaon is in front of me. I cannot escape its inmates even if I would. And when I was arguing the question of the masses of Harijans with Christian friends, I said, 'The majority of Harijans can no more understand the presentation of Christianity than my cows.' This comparison shocked my friends so much that the shock has travelled to America and I have begun to receive letters from America telling me how my comparison is being used to discredit me and my claim to serve Harijans. The critics seem to say, 'You can have little regard for Harijans if you compare them to the cow.'

Nevertheless I am unrepentant. My American credit will be little worth if it can be demolished on the very first shock however trivial it might be. But I hold that my comparison was as innocuous as it was appropriate. It was innocuous because of the unique place the cow occupies in India. It was appropriate because in the matter of understanding the presentation of Christianity the ordinary Harijan can no more take it in than the cow. That the dullest Harijan can be trained to understand it in course of time, whereas the cow never can, is irrelevant for the simple reason that the discussion related to the present condition, not to future possibility. My point would be better understood if I extend the comparison and say that my five-year-old grandson or my sixty-eight-year old wife can no more understand the presentation than my cows, though both my wife and my grandson are objects of tender care and attention. I could say of myself that I can no more read the Chinese alphabet today than my worshipful cow. The truth of this last statement is not in any way altered by the fact that if someone began to teach my cow and me the difficult alphabet, I should beat the cow hollow, if the poor venerable mother ever consented to enter the competition. Let my critics and credulous friends understand that apart from the comparison, I stand on unassailable ground when I assert that it is a travesty of religion to seek to uproot from the Harijans' simple minds such faith as they have in their ancestral religion and to transfer their allegiance to another, even though that other may be as good as and equal to the original in quality. Though all soils

have the same predominant characteristics, we know that the same seeds do not fare equally well in all soils. I have some excellent tree cotton seeds which thrive excellently in certain parts of Bengal. But Mirabehn has not succeeded as yet in getting the same result from the same seeds in the Varoda soil. But I should be unable to subscribe to the formula, if the attempt was made to advance it, that the Varoda soil is inferior to the Bengal soil. But my fear is that though Christian friends nowadays do not say or admit that Hindu religion is untrue, they must harbour in their breasts the belief that Hinduism is an error and that Christianity as they believe it is the only true religion. Without some such thing it is not possible to understand, much less to appreciate, the C. M. S. appeal from which I reproduced in these columns some revealing extracts the other day.[1] One could understand the attack on untouchability and many other errors that have crept into Hindu life. And if they would help us to get rid of the admitted abuses and purify our religion, they would do helpful constructive work which would be gratefully accepted. But so far as one can understand the present effort, it is to uproot Hinduism from the very foundation and replace it by another faith. It is like an attempt to destroy a house which though badly in want of repair appears to the dweller quite decent and habitable. No wonder he welcomes those who show him how to repair it and even offer to do so themselves. But he would most decidedly resist those who sought to destroy the house that had served well him and his ancestors for ages, unless he, the dweller, was convinced that the house was beyond repair and unfit for human habitation. If the Christian world entertains that opinion about the Hindu house, 'Parliament of Religions' and 'International Fellowship' are empty phrases. For both the terms presuppose equality of status, a common platform. There cannot be a common platform as between inferiors and superiors, or the enlightened and the unenlightened, the regenerate and the unregenerate, the high-born and the low-born, the caste man and the outcaste. My comparison may be defective, may even sound offensive. My reasoning may be unsound. But my proposition stands.

Harijan, 13-3-1937

[1] *Vide* "A Christian Letter", pp. 325-7.

448. ANDREWS ON TRAVANCORE

Deenbandhu Andrews writes:

> The arrival of each new number of *Harijan* is one of the exciting events of the week in my old college rooms at Cambridge, where I have been busy lecturing this term: but this morning the paper exceeded my highest expectation. For it told me of the wonderful visit to Travancore, and the joy of the Harijans as they entered the temples freely to meet you and take part in the prayers which you conducted within the temple walls. Many years ago, I had gone down into Travancore at your request—both to Vaikom, where I witnessed the great Satyagraha struggle, and also to Kottayam. Outside Kottayam, in the country district, multitudes of the *avarnas* had come to meet me and to receive your message At one place, nearly two thousand had collected. Their misery and suffering haunted me afterwards and I could not think of anything else. Again, at Vaikom where I stayed with the Satyagrahis, I saw once more the misery and suffering of those who were prevented from going on the road outside the temple On that occasion, I went and pleaded with the Nambudiri Brahmins, but in vain. Now it was wonderful beyond measure to read how that old Satyagraha struggle, with all its bravery and endurance, had at last found its completion! For not merely the roads but the temple itself had been entered by the *savarnas* and *avarnas* together! What I now long to hear is this, that some at least of the Nambudiri Brahmins, who have so truly sought to undo the harm done in the past, may also be led to offer to these Harijans, whom they have thus welcomed as brothers, a brotherly wage for the full work which they perform. Only in that brotherly way can the victory become complete.

From all I hear, the Proclamation is being worked so effectively that the economic salvation which Deenbandhu wants to hear of is bound to come and that sooner than one may expect. For, addressing a meeting of Pulayas, Pariahs and others on the 1st instant at Trivandrum, the Dewan Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar is reported to have said:

> The Maharaja regarded the Temple-entry Proclamation not as an end in itself, but as the first step in the rehabilitation of the State. What was needed was educational upliftment, economic upliftment and social integration. For this, the co-operation of the Ruler

and the people was necessary. Out of consideration for the class of people who were being lifted up, it had been decided to omit the word 'depressed' from Government documents and publications. He ventured to say the time would come when the Depressed Classes would forget that name.

Harijan, 13-3-1937

449. *MARRIED BRAHMACHARYA*[1]

A friend writes:

> I have long since held with you that self-control is the only sovereign method for attaining birth-control. That the sexual act is meant for procreation only, and apart from it, in any shape or form, would amount to unnatural gratification of lust, needs no proof. But sometimes this brings one up against a grave dilemma. Supposing that the sexual act, once or twice, fails to lead to conception, what is one to do then? Where is one to draw the limit? It is hard finally to give up all hope of begetting offspring On the other hand, unlimited indulgence in the sexual act must result in the man being drained of all vitality Again, should such a person be told to regard his failure to beget progeny on the first or the second chance, as a mark of adverse fate and on that score to abstain from having any further intercourse thereafter? But that would require an exceptional degree of self-possession and spiritual strength on the part of the person concerned. Instances of people begetting progeny in their declining years after repeated failure during the years of manhood and youth are by no means either unknown or rare That makes the observance of complete abstinence still more difficult, and the position becomes further complicated when the parties happen to be otherwise healthy and free from any physical defect

I admit the difficulty, but the difficulty is inherent in the problem itself. The road to any progress is strewn with such difficulties and the story of man's ascent in the scale of evolution is co-extensive with the history of the successful overcoming of these difficulties. Take the story of the attempts to conquer the Himalayas. The higher you go the steeper becomes the climb, the more difficult the ascent, so much so that its highest peak still remains unvanquished. The enterprise has already exacted a heavy

[1] The Hindi original of this was published in *Harijan Sevak*, 13-3-1937. The translation is by Pyarelal.

toll of sacrifice. Yet every year sees fresh attempts made only to end in failure like their predecessors. All that has, however, failed to damp the spirit of the explorers. If that is the case with the conquest of the Himalayas, what about the conquest of self, which is a harder job by far, even as the reward is richer? The scaling of the the Himalayas can, at best, give a temporary feeling of elation and triumph. But the reward of the conquest of self is a spiritual bliss that knows no waning and grows ever more and more. It is a well-known maxim of the science of *brahmacharya* that insemination in the case of a man who has properly kept the rules of *brahmacharya* cannot, ought not to, fail to lead to conception. And this is just as it should be. When a man has completely conquered his animality, involuntary incontinence becomes impossible, and the desire for sexual gratification for its own sake ceases altogether. Sexual union then takes place only when there is a desire for offspring. This is the meaning of what has been described as 'married *brahmacharya*'. In other words, a person who obeys this rule, though leading a married life, attains the same state as, and is equal in merit to, one who completely abstains from the sexual act, which is only a means for procreation, never for self-indulgence. In practice, it is true, this ideal is seen to be rarely realized in its completeness. But in shaping our ideals we cannot think in terms of our weaknesses or the possible lapses. The present tendency, however, is to take a complete swing round, and the protagonists of contraceptives have almost set up self-indulgence as their ideal. Self-indulgence obviously can never be an ideal. There can be no limit to the practice of an ideal. But unlimited self-indulgence, as everybody would admit, can only result in certain destruction of the individual or the race concerned. Hence self-control alone can be our ideal, and it has been so regarded from the earliest times. Therefore we have to explore the means of its attainment, not to circumvent it.

It has become my settled conviction that most of the difficulties that are experienced in connection with the practice of *brahmacharya* are due to our ignorance about its laws and would of themselves disappear if we discovered them. Let us, for instance, examine the poser propounded by our correspondent in the ideal light. In the ideal state, in the first place, such a contingency will never arise, because in a normally healthy couple, who have from their childhood upward observed the rules of *brahmacharya*, sexual union can never prove infertile. In practice, however, anomalies do arise. The only rule that can be laid down in such instances is that coitus may be permitted once at the end of the

monthly period till conception is established. If its object is achieved it must be abjured forthwith, for mere sensual gratification should never be its object. It is my faith based on my experience that bodily and mental health increases in the same ratio as bodily and mental chastity. Nor is it to be wondered at. A substance that is capable of producing such a wonderful being as man, cannot but be transmuted into matchless energy and strength. Anyone can test for himself the truth of this observation of the Shastras for himself by personal experience. And the rule holds good, in respect of woman no less than man. The real difficulty, however, is that we vainly expect to be free from outward manifestations of lust, while harbouring it in our minds, with the result that physically and mentally we become utter wrecks, and our lives, in the words of the *Gita* become a living lie or hypocrisy personified.

Harijan, 20-3-1937

450. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON,
March 13, 1937

REBEL DEAR,

Your two letters were destroyed as soon as I finished reading them. I am glad you have kept well. If you have that tape measure by any chance, you will send it to Delhi.

You will tell me all about Shummy after you reach Jullundur.

Of course I shall see Fielden. R.[1] is with me.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3766. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6922

[1] Ramachandran; *vide* p. 212.

451. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

March 13, 1937

DEAR KU,

Here are two letters from Dr. G[1]. There is no provision for leave for such purposes as he mentions. We should accept the resignation. I hope to drop in for a moment in Maganwadi.

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat : G.N. 10113

452. LETTER TO PARIKSHITLAL L. MAJMUDAR

SEGAON,
March 13, 1937

BHAI PARIKSHITLAL,

I got your letter. The description of the Harijan school at Edarpura appears to be good but I refrain from publishing it. There have been instances in the past when, after a favourable description about a school or an institution was received and published, our subsequent experience of it was bitter. Either we do not have the courage to publish such experience or it seems improper to do so. If, however, one occasionally comes across a description like the one you have given, one may derive what joy one can from it and then forget about it. One would then be saved from the kind of embarrassing situation mentioned above. If it is a really good school, it will surely go on progressing. Such a school cares for no praise. I have not seen many reasons to hope that because of our description of a school others will immediately copy its example. However, I have not made it a rule in my mind that such descriptions should never be published. Whenever, therefore, you feel it very necessary to publish a particular description, please write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3956

[1] Dr. Gopichand Bhargava

453. *THE PROBLEM OF THE HANDLOOM*[1]

The following figures represent the aggregate out-turn of handlooms using both indigenous and foreign mill yarn up to 1934:

YEAR		AVERAGE OUT-TURN OF CLOTH IN HUNDRED THOUSAND YARDS
1911-14	..	101
1921-24	..	117
1925-28	..	124
1930	..	134
1931	..	134
1932	..	140
1933	..	172
1934	..	170

It is difficult to say how far these figures are reliable. But I think it may safely be assumed that if they err at all it is on the side of understatement. The actual production of the handlooms is probably higher. We ought to be able to convert all these handlooms to the use of hand-spun yarn, but we are powerless to do that today. Our charkha yarn today is neither of sufficient strength nor is it produced in sufficient quantity. So long as we cannot produce hand-spun yarn that will stand comparison with the mill yarn in strength and uniformity, the handloom weaver will refuse to handle it and for very good reason too. In the first place, the employment of weak and uneven yarn reduces the quantity of cloth that he can turn out in a given time and thus affects his earning capacity. Secondly, the handloom weaver today has specialized more or less in higher lines of production while our output of hand-spun yarn of fine count is extremely meagre and that too is confined mostly to Andhra. The solution of the difficulty involves a complete mastery of the khadi science. But I am not asking anybody to tackle this problem today. It can for the present wait. There are a number of other problems which will have to be successfully tackled before we can cope with the question of the handloom. Only let it be borne in mind that

[1] The original Gujarati was published in *Harijanbandhu*, 14-3-1937. The translation is by Pyarelal.

this problem will have to be successfully tackled before the dream of universalizing khadi is realized.

Harijan, 17-4-1937

454. *NOTES*[1]

[On or after *March 14, 1937*][2]

Review of the activities in the non-Hindi speaking provinces over the past few years.

The importance of this work for the Sammelan.

Special features of the Hindi *prachar* work in the south and how it differs from similar work in the other non-Hindi provinces.

Oneness of Hindi and Urdu. Appeal to the scholars on both sides not to widen the differences between the two.

Admitting the scientific quality of the Devnagari script, an appeal to Hindu scholars to study the Persian script and to Muslim scholars to study Devnagari as a duty.

A review of the work being done in Wardha.

Keeping in view that work, an outline of the coming years' programme and the budget for it.

The outline incorporates the suggestions made by Rajaji and others.

I have only enumerated the topics. They can be discussed further.

[From Hindi]

Panchaven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 380

[1] Gandhiji had prepared these notes for the presidential speech to be delivered by Jamnalal Bajaj at the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan to be held at Madras.

[2] Jamnalal Bajaj has noted in his diary under the date 14-3-1937 that he discussed the subject with Gandhiji. The writing of the notes presumably followed this discussion.

ADDENDA

1. LETTER TO KRAUSE

SEGAON, WARDHA,
February 11, 1937

MY DEAR KRAUSE,

I am ashamed of myself. It will be difficult to forgive myself if you have to leave without our meeting. I would, therefore, ask you if it is at all possible specially to come to Wardha. If you will look at the Railway map you will find that Wardha is a central station. You can go to Calcutta via Wardha. It is, the most direct route from Bombay. You can also go from Calcutta to Madras *via* Wardha though that does become a little indirect. You can also go from Calcutta to Delhi *via* Wardha.

If you find you simply cannot do it I shall not blame you. It will be my stupidity that will be to blame.

I am glad to receive all the messages that you have brought for me. They revive old memories. If you cannot come you will not forget to write and give me your final impressions. I expect you will be going to Delhi. If you do, you should ask your guides to take you to the Harijan Colony, Kingsway, Delhi. You will meet my youngest son there. But what I want you to see is the work going on in the colony amongst the so-called untouchables.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the original: C.W. 10858

2. *LETTER TO KRAUSE*

SEGAON, WARDHA, C. P.,
March 2, 1937

MY DEAR KRAUSE,

You are kind—giving me so many letters. I shall never forgive myself for my letter to you in Bombay not being in time. I see that you cannot come to Wardha. I shall await your fuller letter giving me your impressions. I will not discuss the preliminary opinion that you have given about the situation here. I hope you will have a pleasant voyage.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the original: C.W. 10859

APPENDIX

TRAVANCORE TEMPLE-ENTRY RULES

The following rules and regulations on temple-entry have been issued over the sign manual of H. H. the Maharaja of Travancore:

Whereas we have by Proclamation issued under date November 12 declared, ordained and commanded that, subject to rules and conditions that we may impose, no restriction shall be placed on any Hindu entering and worshipping at temples controlled by us and our Government, we are hereby pleased to enact the following rules:

1. The expression 'temple' occurring in these rules shall include not only the temple and sub-shrines but also mandapams and other buildings as well as tanks or wells appurtenant to the temple.

2. The expression 'Chief Officer of the Devaswom' occurring in these rules shall mean the officer in charge of the Devaswom. It shall also include every officer superior to him and having jurisdiction when such superior officer exercises the powers of the Chief Officer of the Devaswom.

3. In order that the customs and usages obtaining in the several temples under the control of His Highness the Maharaja and the Government in regard to the *Poojas* (service), *Nivedyams* (offerings), *Vazhivadus* (gifts) the *Nithyanidhanam*, *Masavisesham*, *Attavisesham* (special ceremonies), *Utsavam* (festival), and other ordinary and special ceremonies and rituals shall continue to be observed as heretofore, it shall be competent to the Chief Officer of the Devaswom to give, consistently with the objects of the Proclamation, such directions as may be necessary from time to time for regulating the time of entry and worship or limiting the number of those who may enter for worship at a time or maintaining such special customs and usages as are applicable to certain individuals and communities for specific purposes

4. The permission to enter temples shall not be exercised so as to empower entrance into the *Srikoil* (sanctum sanctorum), *Thidapally* (kitchen), and other portions of the temple where specific restrictions even now exist in regard to all persons except those who are allowed to use those portions by custom

5. All worshippers are bound to conform to the directions given by the Chief Officer of the Devaswom in regard to the carrying out of the objects of the Proclamation and these Rules and in regard to places which have to be reserved for the time being for the proper conduct of the rituals

in the temple or observances such as the feeding of persons as heretofore conducted.

6. The classes of persons mentioned hereunder shall not enter within the compound walls of a temple, or its premises in case there is no compound wall.

(a) Persons who are not Hindus; (b) persons under pollution arising out of birth or death in their families; (c) women at such time during which they are not by custom and usage allowed to enter temples; (d) drunken or disorderly persons; (e) persons suffering from any loathsome or contagious disease; (f) persons of unsound mind except when taken for worship under proper control and with the sanction of the Chief Officer of the Devaswom concerned; and (g) professional beggars.

7. No person shall enter into any temple premises unless he wears clean clothes of such materials and in such manner as may be customary. The directions of the Chief Officer of the Devaswom concerned shall prevail until set aside by a higher authority. None shall be allowed to enter temple premises with any footwear, except those who are allowed to do so by custom and usage obtaining in the temple.

8. No person shall, within the temple and premises, spit, chew betel, tobacco or any similar article or smoke or carry with him any article for smoking, or take with him fish, eggs, meat, flesh, toddy, arrack or other intoxicants or any other article or animal inappropriate according to custom and usage to be introduced into the temple.

9. No person shall enter the *Belikkalpura* (the hall in which the main altar-stone is installed), *Valiambalam*, (central shrine), *Nalambalam*, (the halls on four sides) or the *Elamathil* which in some temples takes the place of a *Nalambalam*, with any coat, shirt, vest or such other garment, except women who may wear their usual dress. No head-dress shall be worn except by those who are allowed to do so by custom and usage obtaining in the temple. No one shall take therein any cloth-umbrella, kerosene-light or other article inappropriate to be introduced into such places by custom or usage. In temples where the above restrictions obtain even in regard to entering within the compound walls, the same shall be observed.

10. (1) No one shall enter the portions of a temple specified in the last preceding rule without having, in accordance with custom and usage, bathed, and without the customary caste-mark and without wearing clean clothes of such material and in such manner as may be customary in the temple concerned.

(2) No one except a Hindu shall enter a tank appurtenant to a temple, and every person permitted to enter a tank shall obey such directions as may be given by the Chief Officer of the Devaswom concerned. The direction of the Chief Officer of the Devaswom shall prevail until set aside by a higher authority.

(3) Tanks reserved for the exclusive use of particular functionaries of the temple shall continue to be so reserved

11. Restrictions as to entry and worship, which according to usage and custom apply to all communities alike, shall continue to apply.

12. No one shall interrupt the worship in a temple by loud conversation or other demonstration which would derogate from the solemnity and the proper atmosphere of the temple.

13. It shall not be lawful to any person to use the temple buildings and premises for purposes not connected with or arising from worship, usages and observances of such temples.

14. No one shall do any act which would tend to derogate from the purity and cleanliness of the temple and its premises.

15. If any doubt arises in regard to the applicability of, or conformity to, any of these provisions, the decision of the Chief Officer of the Devaswom concerned shall prevail until set aside by a higher authority.

16. It shall be lawful for the Chief Officer of the Dewaswom concerned to direct that any person who contravenes or is suspected or believed by the Chief Officer of the Devaswom to have contravened any of the provisions of these rules, or disobeys any lawful direction given to him, shall remove himself from the temple and, in case such person does not so remove himself, to cause him to be removed from the temple. In case he resists such removal, or in case when asked to give his name and address he refuses to do so or gives information which is not believed to be true, he shall be liable to be arrested and removed by any Police Officer not below the rank of a Head Constable, and to be dealt with as if he had been arrested under Section 38 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

17. If any person contravenes any of the provisions of these rules, or disobeys any direction lawfully given in pursuance thereof, and thereby renders necessary any purificatory ceremonies, according to the customs and usages of the temple, such person shall be liable to pay the cost of the necessary purificatory ceremonies at the approved rates, and the same shall be recoverable from him as arrears of public or land revenue or otherwise. A person thus contravening or disobeying shall, besides being subject to any penalty to which he may be liable under any other law, be also punishable on conviction by a Magistrate with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three months or with fine or with both.

18. No prosecution under these rules shall lie except on a complaint by a Gazetted Officer having jurisdiction in respect of the temple.

19. No action shall lie against any Devaswom Officer or other public servant who *bona fide* does any act in pursuance of these rules, and no action in a Criminal Court shall lie without sanction of Government.

20. In case of any doubt or dispute regarding the interpretation or the carrying out of any provisions of these rules, the decision of the Dewan thereon shall be final.

21. In cases of emergencies and unforeseen difficulties that may arise in carrying out the provisions and objects of the Proclamation or of these rules, the Dewan shall be competent to pass such orders as he may deem fit.

Harijan, 5-12-1936

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CHRONOLOGY

(November 3, 1936 — March 14, 1937)

November 3, 1936: Gandhiji left Baroda for Surat on his way to Segaon.

November 4: Reached Segaon.

November 9: C. F. Andrews arrived in Segaon to meet Gandhiji.

November 12: Maharaja of Travancore issued Proclamation declaring open temples to all Hindus.

November 17: At Segaon Gandhiji issued statement to the Press congratulating Travancore Maharaja for throwing open temples to Harijans.

December 2–4: Had discussions with Mill-owners of Ahmedabad and representatives of Labour Union.

December 4: Issued statement to the Press regarding Ahmedabad mill industry wage dispute.

December 5: C. F. Andrews, Agatha Harrison and Carl Heath arrived in Segaon.

December 6: Gandhiji gave interview to students of Village Workers' Training School, Wardha.

December 19: Left Segaon for Faizpur to attend Congress session.

December 20: Arrived in Faizpur.

December 21: Addressed meeting of Congress volunteers.

December 22: Addressed public meeting at Kiroda.

December 24: Resigned from Presidentship of All-India Cow-protection League and issued statement to the Press explaining the step.

December 25: Spoke at inauguration of Khadi and Village Industries Exhibition, Faizpur.

December 26: Gave Award on Ahmedabad mill industry wage dispute. Sent message to Students' Conference.

December 27: Addressed public meeting at Exhibition grounds. Spoke at A. I. C. C. meeting.

December 28: Sent message to Rashtrabhasha Sammelan held at Faizpur.

December 29: Had talks with Congress volunteers.
Left Faizpur for Segaon.

December 31: Arrived at Segaon.

January 3, 1937: Henry Polak and Agatha Harrison arrived.

January 6: Gandhiji left Segaon for Poona to meet G. D. Madgavkar, Umpire in Ahmedabad Mill Industry Wage Dispute.

January 7: Arrived in Poona. Had discussions with Ahmedabad Mill-owners and labourers.

January 8: Discussions continued.

January 9: Discussions continued.

January 10: Gandhiji attended reception at Justice Madgavkar's residence. Left Poona for Madras *en route* to Trivandrum.

January 11: Arrived in Madras.
Left for Trivandrum.

January 12: Arrived in Trivandrum.
Addressed public meeting, Trivandrum.

January 13: Trivandrum. Presided over convocation of Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha.
Visited Padmanabha temple.
Addressed public meeting.

January 14: Addressed public meetings on Travancore Proclamation at Neyattinkarai, Venganoor, Tecklai, Thiruvattar and Nagercoil. Arrived in Cape Comorin.

January 15: Left Cape Comorin. Arrived in Trivandrum.

January 16: Addressed public meetings at Varakalla, Paripalli and Quilon advising people to fulfil spirit of Travancore Proclamation.

January 17: Addressed meeting at Thatharampalli advising people to learn Hindi.
Spoke at Haripad on essence of Hinduism.

January 18: Addressed public meetings at Sherthalai and Vaikom. Gave interview to temple trustee, Vaikom. Visited Thakzi.

January 19: Addressed public meeting at Etamanoor, Kumaranelloor, Thiruvarppu, Kottayam.
At Kottayam had discussion with Bishop Moore, Bishop Abraham and others.

January 20: Addressed public meetings at Kottayam, Changanacheri, Thiruvalla, Chenganoor, Aranmula, Elanthoor and Pandalam.

January 21: Kottarakarai. Threw open private temple to Harijans. Addressed public meeting.
Left for Madras.

January 22: Arrived in Madras. Spoke to students of Harijan Industrial School, Kodambakkam.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Gave intervew to an Egyptian.

January 23: Visited cyclone-affected areas of Guntur, and Bezwada. Also collected funds for victims. Left for Segaon.

January 24: Arrived in Segaon.

February 26: Jawaharlal Nehru and other Congress Leaders arrived.

February 27–28: Gandhiji attended Congress Working Committee Meeting at Wardha.

March 3: Had talk with an Egyptian Deputation on Indo-Egyptian relations.

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25	Paragraph 3, line 1	Gajanand	Gajanan
127	Line 4	vexed yourself.	you vexed yourself.
270	Item No.	283	287
292	Line 1	night	nights
302	Last line	so,	so, I
362	Paragraph 2, line 5 from bottom	case	cases
363	Footnote, last line	"Award Labour Dispute"	"Award in Labour Dispute"
435	Item No.	443	442